Summoned Slaughterer

(呼び出された殺戮者)

Volume 09

There is cultural exchange because peace is in sight

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Story Description:

Touno Hifumi was summoned to another world, to be a Hero for a kingdom. Unbeknownst to the summoners, he's a kill-happy person who restrained his killer instincts with martial arts. Upon arrival he slaughter various knights and the mastermind of the event, the King. Unwilling to oppose this strong killer, the Princess let him go free. Thus start the fun life of travelling the world, unrestraintly killing any who attempt to kill him.

But first, lets purchase a pair of female slaves.

Original Story can be found here: Link

Chapter 67: As Long As You Love Me

The king of Horant, Suprangel, chose to calm down the uproar outside and within the castle. He declared peace and reconciliation because of the negotiations with the feudal lord Hifumi Tohno of the Fokalore territory within Orsongrande.

The details of those negotiations were:

“Monetary reparations concerning the damages done by Horant.”

“Initiation of direct magic tools trade with Fokalore as well as Orsongrande by Horant’s royal family without passing through Vichy.”

“The permission of Fokalore’s soldiers to be stationed within the domain of Horant.”

These three agreements were playing a leading role.

Especially the third point, not only was it unheard-of in history for a foreign army to be stationed within another country, but the opposing voices of the domestic nobles against Suprangel were strong. However, the king disregarded those.

“It will only be beneficial to Orsongrande”, Horant’s nobles ground their teeth out of vexation, but there was a problem of the other royal family members not having enough ability to oppose the king after Veldore’s death.

Of course that didn’t mean that Suprangel happily swallowed those terms.

Even now, while listening to the talks of the nobles, who insisted in their stinging dissenting views in the name of remonstrating him with 「What insolence」, he recalled the conversation with Hifumi.

“You are asking me to place your troops in my country… ?” (Suprangel)

With the audience hall being in a desolate state because of the terrible scene of corpses being scattered all over, the two carried out their negotiations in another room that had been prepared.

In normal cases, there is a lot of importance attached to formality such as seating order, but since it was a discussion between the king and a single noble it became a conversation of both sitting on an equal level this time.

“That’s only natural. Though we will teach you how to fight, it will be pointless if it’s only 1 or 2 soldiers.” (Hifumi)

“Though I think that the compensation and the direct trade can’t be avoided…” (Suprangel)

“At the beginning.” (Hifumi)

Not making himself quite clear, Hifumi muttered towards the king while entrusting his back to the chair and looking up to the ceiling.

“I’m curious, won’t it create a situation of different small warlords rivalling with each other within the noble’s consul, if the political centre of Horant is destroyed and a large amount of the populace becomes rootless? I wondered whether I should do such experiment, but…” (Hifumi)

He says an outrageous thing with a serious look.

“However it would be too wasteful to lose the technology of magic tools due to that. There is the problem with the sense of pain and ego vanishing, but the body enhancement was good. If that sort of technology spreads even more, the killing will become a lot more enjoyable. It should also cause an effect of thinking about war more deeply in various ways.” (Hifumi)

“We will arrive at that place in the end.” (Suprangel)

“Of course”, Hifumi laughs.

“I was transferred here from another world against my will by the idiots of Orsongrande. I planned to go on a rampage a little bit as I had to hold back so long, but there was a lot less resistance than I imagined.” (Hifumi)

“Another world… ?” (Suprangel)

“Imeraria called it summoning magic. It seems to be an ancient technique, however I don’t know about it quite well. I was forcibly summoned from another country by that spell. If you feel like it, it’s alright to exchange blows with the royal family of Orsongrande due to that.” (Hifumi)

“That is... I will pass on that. Even if I said something now, it wouldn’t amount to much more than a loser’s whining. However, aren’t you denying the possibility of Horant going to war against Orsongrande?” (Suprangel)

“No, it’s a standpoint of recommending the opposite. If it reaches the point that people use their heads, the battles will become as long and violent as possible. I didn’t tell you add the provision of being non-aggressive towards Orsongrade for a reason. That’s how it is.” (Hifumi)

There was no need for Suprangel to say anything else anymore. He doesn’t know how soon that man would devour the country once again if he doesn’t finish the conference quickly and settle down the internal affairs somehow.

While making a civil official take notes, they worked out the details of the drawn up official document. Both of them signed two versions each and kept one for themselves.

With this they concluded the unprecedented peace between a single noble’s territory and a whole country.

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“Somehow we were welcomed with an amazing vigour.” (Alyssa)

“It’s likely the king’s instigation. His soldiers probably decreased considerably. They might not want to risk even skirmishes, to say nothing of a war, until they have reorganised their army to some extent.” (Hifumi)

Incidentally, as he left the castle, he was joined by Alyssa who caught up.

Although the negotiations advanced at a considerable speed within their limitations, they mostly haven’t encountered any enemies, let alone

even an outstanding opposition. On the contrary, once they got closer to the capital, a messenger welcomed them and told them the end result.

Alyssa's group, which had intended to open hostilities upon coming into contact with the enemy, got completely discouraged.

"Origa already started the aforementioned strategy. As it had been decided that we will train the soldiers of this country for the time being, I will have you, together with the lot you brought along, stay here and drill them. The period is half a year." (Hifumi)

"For half a year!?" (Alyssa)

"I plan to start the next step in around that time." (Hifumi)

Hifumi says while scribbling on some kind of document. Alyssa tilted her head to the side.

"Next?" (Alyssa)

"Right, next. Because I will make sure to have Horant, Orsongrande and Vichy approach a pleasant standstill, soldiers of various places will be trained during that time. After that I will somehow give them a trigger." (Hifumi)

Alyssa quietly sighed due to Hifumi laughing innocently.

"I leave the methods of drilling to you. Alyssa will occasionally return to the territory. While at it, we will also replace the lot stationed here. It's also necessary to have similar training in Vichy and the other territories." (Hifumi)

"It will become busy, eh?" (Alyssa)

"Yea, but it will also become a lot more fun. ... Alyssa." (Hifumi)

"What?" (Alyssa)

"There's no particular necessity to continue doing the unreasonable. It's also unnecessary to feel gratitude. I was able to enjoy Vichy plentifully." (Hifumi)

"Do I seem to be that worn out?" After Alyssa inclines her head to the

side, she laughs with her whole face.

“Gratitude, eh? I also followed Hifumi-san intending to repay the favour at the beginning, but now that’s not it. Seeing various cities in various countries, looking at an unknown world and talking with companions I’m getting along with is fun.” (Alyssa)

Alyssa’s eyes were suddenly filled with tears.

“That’s why I’m together with Hifumi-san. At the time of going through a bitter experience in Vichy, I thought about wanting to die, but since it’s this much fun right now, I consider it to be fine as it is.” (Alyssa)

“Please treat me well”, when Alyssa bowed, Hifumi tapped her shoulder while smiling as well.

“I see. It’s fine to do what you like as long as you enjoy it. It’s your life after all.” (Hifumi)

“Uh huh. It’s a blessing if you can do what you like.” (Alyssa)

“Yes, that’s right... Eep.” (Hifumi)

Once Hifumi raised his look, he saw the soldiers of Fokalore chewing their handkerchiefs behind Alyssa while spilling tears of gratitude. Their resounding, sobbing voices were similar to the wails reputed to be heard from the entrance to hell.

“Director! I will accompany you for the rest of my life as well!” (Soldier)

“Please tell us anything! We will do our utmost to fulfil your wishes!” (Soldier)

“Yea, best regards from now on too!” (Alyssa)

Watching the soldiers answer in one voice to call of Alyssa, Hifumi secretly left the place wondering since when those guys had become this disgusting. (T/N: Lol)

He hastened his return for the sake of creating the next place of conflict.

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The first task of Vaiya, who became the vice-captain of the new Royal Knight Order, was to proceed towards Fokalore. It had been decided he would carry out negotiations before involving Phyrinion.

It's about a request to instruct the knight order as well as the national armed forces.

Being the initiator and an acquaintance of Hifumi, Sabnak has assisted in the guarding of the former soldiers of Horant on their travel to Fokalore before returning to the royal castle. He also had the national task to make sure they arrive with his own eyes.

Along the way he, alongside the accompanying soldier of the national army, participated in the training of Fokalore's soldiers.

Excluding Vaiya, who participated several times, the soldiers of the national army only inclined their heads to the side in doubt whether the unfamiliar training regime had any effect.

However, in addition to the merit of hunting during journeys, the Fokalore soldiers killed a bandit group, they encountered by chance, by themselves while the national army was confused. Due to them displaying conspicuous fighting strength, the national army's soldiers improved by imitating their training.

And before long they arrived at Fokalore.

"On top of the attendants having increased considerably, the person in charge is absent..." (Caim)

Caim expressionlessly muttered a few words as if being fed up. Splitting the soldiers, who came from Horant to immigrate, into groups and assigning accommodations, he quickly broke up the soldiers and had staff members guide them.

The staff and territorial soldiers, who were instructed without delay, began to move without any particular disorder. The soldier, who was chosen to explain the state of affairs to Miyukare, dropped his shoulders, feeling to have drawn the short end of the stick as it was apparent that Miyukare would be displeased about Alyssa not returning, and walked

away.

Vaiya, who was rolled up in that skilled performance, is guided to Phyrinion by Brokkra.

Being guided and entering the feudal lord's mansion, Vaiya showed interest in its structure.

The neatly cleaned-up first floor is completely a public space. There is a clerk on standby at the information desk to give easy-to-understand guidance. A row of counters is lining up in a clear order for all kinds of reports. The residents are quietly talking in the meeting space. It's rather busy with people like apparently newly-wed who are exchanging information with fellow couples and people, who are reminiscing with others that lost their relatives as well.

"This is amazing..." (Vaiya)

Brokkra explained in detail as Vaiya was taken aback.

"All of this is following the teachings of Lord-sama. Each of the staff members, with the exception of us 5 civil official slaves, has their own individual role and it had been established that they use the pre-set format as well. They are managing everything like the occupation, family structure and address of the inhabitants." (Brokkra)

"Address?" (Vaiya)

Vaiya posed a question hearing an unknown word.

"Beginning with this city, there is a manager and a name for each block of the cities and villages Lord-sama controls. And since all buildings have a number added to them, it has reached the point that any building is defined by its block's name and number. The delivery service, that begun as private organisation, is using that as well." (Brokkra)

"What a..." (Vaiya)

Vaiya can't hide his shock due to them being able to organise things and people in a way even the capital can't. At the time of realising that there were a lot of things he should study besides military affairs, he

regretted to not have brought along even more of the other knights as well.

The office, used by Phyrinion, is on the second floor of the mansion. Usually there are people coming and going without interruption, but now that a envoy of the royal castle has come, the flow of people had been stopped temporarily.

Once Brokkra knocked on the door, Krinola came over and opened it.

As they enter, Phyrinion stands up to welcome them.

“Welcome. Although we’ve heard about the envoy from the royal castle, I hope you can accept me, Phyrinion el Amazelotto, as representative.” (Phyrinion)

Since the moment he looked at the slightly tired expression of the smiling Phyrinion, Vaiya couldn’t avert his eyes from Phyrinion. Her soft, green and lush wavy hair and her brightly glittering orange pupils. Noticing his own leering at her smiling lips, Vaiya turned away his look in a fluster.

“Is anything wrong?” (Phyrinion)

“N-No! Please excuse me!” (Vaiya)

Vaiya, who unintentionally ends up using a loud voice, sits down urged by they reception while blushing. Brokkra tells them that his next official duty is waiting for him and leaves.

“I’m the vice-captain of the newly established Royal Knight Order, Vaiya Zuellen. (T/N: >> Tsue~ren)” (Vaiya)

Given that his face heated up once he looked at her face, he greeted her while looking slightly downwards, but as he was wearing the uniform of the knight order which attracts attention, his face flushed all the more.

“Royal Knight Order?” (Phyrinion)

Phyrinion involuntarily knitted her brows due to the unfamiliar expression.

“Though it is disgraceful, it’s an incomplete knight order that still has a

bit work left to do as organisation as it was just founded the other day. The captain is Sabnak-dono, who hails from the Third Knight Order just like you. It's likely that he is just about now returning to the capital almost as if replacing me." (Vaiya)

"He is... By the way, you know about me belonging to the Third Knight Order?" (Phyrinion)

"I was told various things by Sabnak-dono before leaving Münster. Since you are probably experiencing hardships as his replacement, he wants to help you if he gets a chance to do so." (Vaiya)

Vaiya pretended to not notice her instantaneous angry expression due to Sabnak's verbal message. Rather than that, he is embarrassed to have become more talkative than usual without hurrying up the talks at all.

"Looks like various things have happened in the royal castle." (Phyrinion)

"Yes, both, the First and Second, Knight Orders have been dissolved. Earl Tohno has played a great part in that." (Vaiya)

Vaiya explained the situation as far as he knew himself to Phyrinion.

Although there were various things he wanted to be taught from now on, he planned to tell Phyrinion all of the news without being concerned about them being highly classified information.

The war with Horant, the matter of Hifumi marching into Horant, the prince's death and the princess' decision. Phyrinion silently listened to all of the topics.

"... Thank you very much. The world is changing at an outrageous speed. Even the incomprehensible common sense of the original lord of this territory, I was able to realise it once again." (Phyrinion)

Choosing this timing, Krinola exchanged the completely cooled-down black tea. Stealing a fleeting glance at Vaiya's face during the time of placing the cups, she almost unintentionally burst into laughter. She is wondering why her own master doesn't realise the state of the male in front of her.

“And? You surely haven’t expressly accompanied the travel of the defeated soldiers from Horant for the sake of reporting the state of things this time, right?” (Phyrinion)

“Yes, of course not. Though I also ascertained the immigrants from Horant with my own eyes, the real issue for me to come here is to convey a request from the royal castle.” (Vaiya)

“From the royal castle? Are the contents intended for my ears?” (Phyrinion)

Phyrinion made sure whether it was fine to not wait for Hifumi to return, but even grasping that, Vaiya does nothing more but continuing the prior discussion.

“Of course I’m well aware that the final decision will rest with the feudal lord. However, judging from Earl Tohno’s character, he makes prompt decisions if possible. Before that I planned to request a prior examination whether or not it will be possible.” (Vaiya)

Certainly there is also the possibility of Hifumi deciding during his stay at the royal castle, but at any rate it might be different if there is or isn’t a preparatory phase.

“If that’s what this is about, I will listen to your story.” (Phyrinion)

“Fokalore’s feudal army’s state of being undefeated, we came to the conclusion that the secret of their strength lies in the content of their training regimen. Therefore, because there won’t be a problem in borrowing a few soldiers from the feudal army, we are planning to request them to coach the national army.” (Vaiya)

“With such kind of talk, it’s even fine to talk to the civil official slaves about it. There’s probably no one as well-informed about this territory as them.” (Phyrinion)

“It’s to the degree of them knowing more than the feudal lord”, Vaiya gaze was glued to Phyrinion’s smile as she said that while laughing.

“Umm, is there something wrong?” (Phyrinion)

As expected, even Phyrinion would notice it if she was stared at with a bright right face. Though, in her case it was a feeling of wondering whether she had said anything offending in this situation.

At last noticing that he was watching her in fascination due to being called, Vaiya averted his gaze while stroking his cheeks in panic.

“E-Excuse me! Just, seeing... your beaut... y...” (Vaiya)

Vaiya doesn’t make eye contact wit Phyrinion realising the meaning of those words after finishing them.

Even Phyrinion ended up hanging her head in shame with a bright red face thanks to the unforeseen words.

“Umm... thank you very much...” (Phyrinion)

After squeezing out words of thanks a few times, both of them ended up silently looking downwards with red faces.

Krinola, who left the room quietly, got enthusiastic about reporting this to Phyrinion’s family’s home, the Amazelotto household.

Chapter 68: Come Together

Once Imeraria finished reading the delivered report, she sat down on a nearby chair.

“I-Imeraria-sama!?” (Maid)

She raised her hand to rein in the maid who rushed over from the side, she was standing at the ready, in a panic.

“I’m alright. I only felt a bit tired.” (Imeraria)

With a frail smile she ordered the prime minister to be summoned and read over the report once again.

“Something like forming a treaty between a nation and noble’s territory... This is something like slighting our country. Originally this would probably make him a target of disciplinary actions, but...” (Imeraria)

If I consider the citizens as a whole, for them it will mean the opportunity to obtain cheap magic tools on top of him having defeated the enemy nation. It’s very likely they won’t comprehend what’s wrong with that, Imeraria estimates.

The report might have also reached the prime minister. Faster than she expected, there was knocking on the door to her office.

“Enter.” (Imeraria)

“As you have ordered, I have come.” (Adol)

“Though I think you’ve heard about it, it’s about Horant’s matter.” (Imeraria)

Prime Minister Adol, having obtained Imeraria’s permission to stand at ease, told her that the report has reached him as well.

Imeraria nods.

“I also considered whether we should punish Earl Tohno, but realistically it’s probably impossible. Assuming we do something reckless, Fokalore might oppose Orsongrande... no, there might also be a

not so small number of nobles supporting Hifumi-sama. The situation is that all the former Vichy territories have been annexed by Fokalore." (Imeraria)

"I'm also agreeing with Imeraria-sama's view." (Adol)

"Then, it's fine to carefully watch the situation?" (Imeraria)

"I considered whether this isn't a good opportunity." (Adol)

As Imeraria asked "Good opportunity?", Adol excused himself for being presumptuous.

"It's the long-awaited chance to hold Imeraria-sama's coronation ceremony while at the same time celebrating Earl Tohno's military gains. The opposing nobles won't be able to meddle at a moment's notice, if Earl Tohno is close by." (Adol)

Imeraria decided to agree with this suggestion of the prime minister as good idea, but once she carefully considered Hifumi's character, she noticed a point that should cause apprehensions.

"Won't this turn into a situation of "being used" which he hates the most?" (Imeraria)

"It's probably necessary to explain it in advance and get his consent. If we also prepare something to please Earl Tohno, it will be even better." (Adol)

Due to Adol answering pridefully, Imeraria lowered her eyebrows.

"What in the world are you planning? I already don't want to lose anyone else thanks to thoughtlessness, however..." (Imeraria)

"You may be relieved. In my humble opinion it will be alright as long as we discuss about a proper request for Earl Tohno. To put it simple, he will participate by himself without knowing that he is being used in a disagreeable way. It will be fine if we just directly request it from him sincerely." (Adol)

"Because it's just at the right time where we are also asking him to coach the soldiers of the national army", Adol said.

“If you consider him with the intention to become hostile against him, he is indeed a terrifying opponent, but if you rely on him as an ally, there won’t be anyone more reliable either.” (Adol)

Imeraria closed her eyes to think about Adol’s words.

“... Understood. We will use your plan, prime minister. However, I will be the one to directly talk with Hifumi-sama about the request. Please tell the knight order to invite Hifumi to this place once he enters the capital.” (Imeraria)

“As you wish.” (Adol)

Adol, who hang his head deeply, got teary eyes.

“And, I congratulate Imeraria-sama from the bottom of my heart for the succession of the throne.” (Adol)

Even though Imeraria realises his trembling voice, she shows a whiff of a smile.

“In one way or another it caused you to worry, eh? Please support me from now on as well, okay?” (Imeraria)

“At your command!” (Adol)

For a short while Adol wasn’t able to raise his face.

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Hifumi, who swiftly finished up this and that in Horant, mounted the horse, he had Suprangel concede to him, and already came back as far as the national border of Orsongrande to Horant.

He left the territorial army heading towards Fokalore with the words “It’s fine if you return while also properly doing some sightseeing.”

At first he freely travelled on the highway, but as the amount of people moving on the highway increased the closer he got to Orsongrande, he reluctantly got stuck with travelling besides the highway where it wasn’t paved.

“What happened?” (Hifumi)

Almost the entire flow of people advancing on the highway is heading in the direction of Orsongrande, just like Hifumi. Using carriages and wagons, there are many people moving together with their entire families visible. Sporadically he catches sight of merchant-like people who embarked on carriages loaded with some goods.

"Say, the highway is awfully crowded. Did something happen?" (Hifumi)

He called out to a merchant riding on a carriage close-by with the only reason for his choice being the proximity in the height of his view.

"Ah, there is some very grave battle going on in the royal castle of Horant. I heard many soldiers have died. Since there seems to be a rich territory accepting anyone in Orsongrande, everyone is aiming to go there." (Merchant)

Hifumi arrives at the called-out merchant even though there are many people moving around them. He is selling food and daily necessities to the masses along the road.

"Given that I'm selling my goods by moving within Horant, the right business opportunity popped up. That's the kind of guy I am." (Merchant)

As the density of people increases the closer it is to the border, it might be profitable for business. He answered with a pleased expression.

"I see. Thanks." (Hifumi)

Throwing a gold coin to the merchant, Hifumi headed on.

Advancing on the highway for another two hours, there is an excessive congestion of carriages right before the border.

Because there is the danger of losing carriages or wagons if proceeding off the pavement, everyone is waiting to go ahead with a resigned expression.

"Oh, this is?" (Hifumi)

Albeit a small amount, the scent of blood came drifting from further ahead.

Instinctively the corners of Hifumi's mouth rise.

While advancing in a hurry offside the highway, he adjusts the location of his katana hanging at his waist.

Soon the source of the congestion came in sight.

"Line up! Stand in a row!"

A man, wearing the equipment of a common soldier from Horant, is raising his voice quite loudly.

Several other people are lined up. It seems he is doing an inspection or interrogation of them one by one.

A single soldier blocked the way of Hifumi approaching on top of the horse.

"Don't you have a strange appearance. Tell me your reason for coming here." (Soldier)

"Before that, listen, when I passed through here a few days ago a lot like you wasn't here, but what the hell are you doing?" (Hifumi)

"Tsk." (Soldier)

Clicking his tongue, the soldier drew his sword.

It causes a commotion among the commoners, who were in the vicinity. Some also take a distance.

"Answer the question without nitpicking!" (Soldier)

Ignoring the yelling soldier, Hifumi watched the exchange of the group at the front. He discovered the soldier receiving money from the people there.

"Toll... eh?" (Hifumi)

"That's right! You have to pay one silver coin if you want to pass here!" (Soldier)

Due to the soldier's words, who doesn't even try to hide it anymore, Hifumi pointed at a single woman with her children.

“Hey, you. Listen to me for just a minute.” (Hifumi)

“Y-Yes.” (Woman)

“Is there a system of giving charity to dumb soldiers in this country?” (Hifumi)

“Eh? Umm, that…” (Woman)

While alternating her look between the soldier and Hifumi, the woman is puzzled what kind of answer would be good. The soldier is scary, but it seems Hifumi’s eyes are scary as well.

“You! Are you taking me for a fool!?” (Soldier)

Taking a step forward with his left foot in rage, he raised his sword overhead, but the soldier’s movement suddenly stopped.

The katana, drawn and held with the left hand in a backhand grip, is piercing the soldier’s left eye.

“Didn’t I tell you? A dumb soldier.” (Hifumi)

While saying “You should listen more closely to what people tell you”, the eyeball flies off due to Hifumi pulling out the katana and shaking the blood off it.

At the same time as the dead soldier fell, screams rose from the surroundings.

“Shut up!” (Hifumi)

Due to Hifumi’s roar, the people, who tried to escape, stopped their feet as well.

The other soldiers came rushing over as well. From the fact that all of them are wearing a similar-looking leather armour, Hifumi understands that apparently are soldiers of Horant.

A single one among them stepped forward and looked at the collapsed soldier.

“… What the heck is this about?” (Soldier)

“I killed him because he came slashing at me with his drawn sword.”

(Hifumi)

He is holding the drawn katana in his right hand.

“I will ask once again, what are you doing? Though, judging by appearance, it seems there are two choices to pay money to pass through or otherwise be sent away.” (Hifumi)

“We are prohibiting the travel that hasn’t been approved by either the king or a feudal lord. Only those paying the price to obtain permission can go on!” (Soldier)

Throwing out his chest as if trying to daunt him, the soldier stares at Hifumi atop his horse. In a casual manner he puts his hand on the sword at his waist.

“Permission, eeh… ?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi surveyed the uneasy looking commoners in a circle.

“However, doesn’t it seem like there isn’t any guy handing over such official papers? In short, I wonder if it’s a story of giving a bribe? Do it more boldly.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who laughed scornfully without warning, continues further on,

“So, even setting those guys aside, are you going to take money from me as well?” (Hifumi)

“Tsk. Bastard, tell me your name and aim! Whether you pass through depends on the amount of money.” (Soldier)

“If you are a citizen of Horant, it is only natural to repay us for working for the sake of the country.” Continuing to listen to the words of the soldier, Hifumi ended up being unable to contain a loud laughter.

“Ahahahaha! What bad luck! I’m not a citizen of Horant.” (Hifumi)

He took out the traffic permit signed by Imeraria from his pocket.

“I’m a noble of Orsongrande. Since I want to return to my territory, hurry up and open the way.” (Hifumi)

The soldier, who took a long hard look at the document, opened the

path while shivering in anger or fluster.

Just as he reached a position, where he was surrounded by the soldier, Hifumi stopped his horse and turned his sight towards the people, who were on the highway.

“Ah, which reminds me, I’m one of the feudal lords as well. The place is known as Tohno territory which has the city Fokalore as its core, but...” (Hifumi)

The people, who heard the name Fokalore of the Tohno territory, began to suddenly get noisy. If the story of the merchant was true, they were headed towards that place.

“If you are going there, you will be welcome. As Earl Hifumi Tohno, a noble affiliated with Orsongrande, I’m approving your passage as applicants. Of course, free of charge.” (Hifumi)

The people almost raised their voices in joy due to Hifumi, who unexpectedly proposed this matter on his own accord, however a soldier was the first to raise his voice.

“Don’t screw around! What are you pulling here as noble of a foreign country!?” (Soldier)

“However, didn’t you say any noble and any feudal lord before?” (Hifumi)

Though it is completely a sophism, it will be perfectly fitting if the goal is to provoke them, Hifumi is smiling.

“All of you, draw your swords! This guy is a criminal who only calls himself a noble!” (Soldier)

Upon those words every soldier present drew their sword.

“You drew them, eh?” (Hifumi)

Looking around by turning in a circle, Hifumi made sure that all soldiers set up their swords and muttered a single question.

Promptly jumping off the horse, he bisects a single soldier without hesitation.

While standing up, he wards off another's sword to the side and slices him with a reverse hassou stance. (T/N: Now this one was a major pain to translate. The way he kills the soldier is a kendo move called suriage [gives a point in a kendo match], describing the motion fully is way difficult so your best choice is to watch a video or a kendo anime. The hassou no kamae is a stance of having the sword grabbed with both hands and raising it upwards at one side near the shoulder, now do the reverse and you got it... whatever that would actually mean in kendo stances)

As the encirclement was broken by two soldiers having collapsed, he let the horse get away.

"Hey, if you draw, you have to slash. If you hold your weapons, you have to kill." (Hifumi)

"Gugugu... get him!" (Soldier)

The soldier, with a deep red face, chose to have them, including himself as well, slash at Hifumi at the same time, but the outcome was something tragic.

Some have their heads sent flying, some are dumbfounded at having their bellies sliced and are staring at the sight of their own organs spilling out and some have fainted in agony due to losing their limbs...

The last remaining soldier came assaulting with his sword in total desperation, however having him drop the sword by striking its middle part with the left hand, Hifumi makes a full revolution holding the katana and cuts off the lower part of the soldier's right arm.

"Aguu..." (Soldier)

While shedding large quantities of blood from his arms, the fallen soldier before long dies of blood loss.

The people, who saw the entire spectacle unfold, are looking at Hifumi with completely frightened facial expressions.

"Good grief..." (Hifumi)

At the time he put his katana back into its scabbard after wiping it with a paper, the soldier, who had his arm loped off, died.

“Because my area’s territorial soldiers will come here a few days later, it’s fine for you talk to them if you feel like it. Rather than those fellows, they will treat you properly, probably.” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who found the horse that had come back, ran up to the horse in joy and gently brushed it. Once he nimbly mounted it, he quickly went his way.

While the people, ending up not having to pay any money, don’t comprehend what has just happened, they pull themselves together and continue walking.

☺ ☻ ☺

“Am I fated to be chased by work no matter where I go… ?” (Sabnak)

If it was to be like this, it would have been alright to rest at the place of brother-in-law for a bit longer, Sabnak lamented in his newly provided office within the king’s castle.

At the same time as Sabnak returned to the capital, an official ceremony was held for the first founding of the Royal Knight Order due to Imeraria’s coronation. The captain was Sabnak and the vice-captain was Vaiya. Several people were chosen from each, the Second and Third Knight Order.

Consolidating all the remaining knights, those were reshuffled into an organisation that was merely called knight order. The former captain of the Third Knight Order, Lotomago, was appointed as its captain and there were three vice-captains including Midas.

There is no hierarchical relationship between the two knight orders. The main duty of the Royal Knight Order is the protection of the royalty as well as the castle. The knight order leads the army to maintain the public order and for military activities.

Having been appointed in a hurry, Sabnak was dressed in the new order’s uniform that was handed to him by Imeraria herself. The first

assigned task for him is to draft and practise the security protocol of the coming coronation ceremony. It was major task.

“Why is there so much work?” (Sabnak)

Having dispatched Phyrinion to the Fokalore territory as my replacement, I feel relieved in my heart, but being responsible for that side might have been better if it’s like this, he clearly judges.

At any rate, since it is a fresh unit that has been formed just recently, let alone cooperation, the order’s members just finished meeting their comrades. No matter how much Imeraria is the only protection subject, I can’t help but feel there will security holes in this wide royal castle and its surroundings even if I wrack my brain devising a plan.

“Excuse me.” (Maid)

The one to enter the office was the new maid, who was assigned to Sabnak.

“A letter has arrived from Royal Knight Order Vice-Captain Vaiya.” (Maid)

“Ah, thanks.” (Sabnak)

The given letter was a rolled up parchment having a thorough wax seal.

“What!? Such exaggeration…” (Sabnak)

While tearing off the wax and reading the contents, Sabnak spilled tears.

The letter from Vaiya states that while waiting for Hifumi in Fokalore following Imeraria’s instruction, there are requests from other fiefs flooding in to train their soldiers and educate their civil officials. He lightly and in a comprehensible way writes that even the former Vichy territories are in the process of switching over to the same political system as Fokalore. At the end he wrote to report about the “Engagement to Phyrinion-san” to report about it to his superior officer, Sabnak.

“What the hell is this? Though I’m not able to enjoy food and women as I’m busily running about…” (Sabnak)

“Captain-sama.” (Maid)

“Isn’t this way of calling me weird? So, what is it?” (Sabnak)

As he asks while holding a handkerchief to his eyes, the maid says expressionlessly,

“If you like, you can join me for dinner?” (Maid)

“... Won’t you stop it, if it’s out of pity?” (Sabnak)

“No, it isn’t.” (Maid)

This maid is outrageous, he shook his head.

“I just wondered whether this was a chance to gain money and power by marrying a rich and powerful man.” (Maid)

Sabnak cried. (T/N: Owned, lol)

Chapter 69: My Way

Next to the feudal lord's mansion in Fokalore there is a large second residence built by the previous feudal lord. His lovers and the servants lived there. Currently it is functioning as staff's dormitory.

Since there were rooms left, it was decided that the unmarried aspirants desiring to work as staff among the group of immigrants from Horant will live there temporarily. Because it's the staff's dormitory to begin with, they are provided with three meals per day in the dining hall.

In addition, those wanting to join the feudal army will enter the dormitories for families and singles of the territorial troops. Those hoping for employment and those, who possessed skills in carpentry and blacksmithing, were moved to inns in the whole town and dormitories for the pupils of craftsmen.

The people, who chose the path of becoming a staff member, were given a probation for studying first.

It's quite different from the image they had of the territory's circumstances, but currently Fokalore is becoming a cutting-edge training centre in this world, let alone within the country.

Including even those who have left the alienated Vichy, where education is compulsory, there are many people like the sons of the coming and going merchants and those who are working as civil officials in the neighbouring cities and other noble's fiefs, who are gathering in Fokalore for "studying abroad" to receive education.

In addition to learning the basics in what is called advancing through a set curriculum, there was a charm in being taught anything without reserves concerning the territorial administration of Fokalore, which has accomplished a successful expansion.

Even with only this education service, the Tohno territory's operation budget is profiting quite a bit.

Although the population is growing, the staff members got used to

handling the citizen's information and the registration in the family register. Rather, the situation has begun to settle down within the mansion of the feudal lord. Although the immigrants from Horant caused some temporary noise, it reached the point that the staff could take a little vacation, even including the civil official slaves.

There is one person that doesn't find such situation amusing.

"Recently the opportunities to build remarkably interesting things vanished." (Pruflas)

As group leader of the development team the dwarf Pruflas hadn't even the time to sleep for an hour. Nowadays they are building office supplies like tables and chairs. They bid farewell to the calm days where they could leisurely drink sake.

"Something interesting?" (Vaiya)

His conversation partner was Vaiya.

Participating in the training of the feudal army in the beginning, he asked Miyukare, who is the person in charge of military affairs, to teach him the management of troops and the unique way of thinking to implement three man cells within the ranks, but he ended up being driven away by her, who was extremely displeased over being separated from Alyssa.

There was also the matter of the place being a room within the lord's mansion.

"Guys, who are emitting an aura of happiness, should just leave!" (Miyukare)

This shout of Miyukare became a famous saying handed down amongst the staff on the second floor.

Contributing to the increasing number of couples between the single staff members appearing, Miyukare has completely solidified her position as "Court Lady-sama" with those few words.

"Now that you mention it, the wagons and spear throwers, used by the

feudal army, apparently were developed here." (Vaiya)

"We built them, but the idea came from the Lord. The platform wagons were wagons with wheels attached for travelling within the territory having the name rail car at the beginning." (Pruflas)

"They didn't run well and were terrible." Pruflas laughs while gulping down the sake he held in one hand.

"We build this and that. There were also thing's that couldn't be used as weapons at all. There is the collapsible fan called "Folding Fan." Did you see them being sold as souvenirs in Fokalore? That thing is something we originally tried to make out of wood as a trial at the time we produced the iron-ribbed fan Origa-jou-chan possesses. Though it was the Lord who gave it its name." (Pruflas)

The more he heard, the less Vaiya could understand the character called Hifumi. Before he noticed it, he was making a troubled face. Pruflas laughs.

"What are you making such weird face for? If you want to know about Lord-sama, you simply have to ask Origa-jou-chan. Though she hasn't returned yet." (Pruflas)

"I see..." (Vaiya)

"Putting that aside, you are a knight-sama, aren't you? If you are curious, there are spares of the weapons Lord-sama uses. Do you want to have a look?" (Pruflas)

"Is that alright?" (Vaiya)

Seeing Vaiya saying this delightfully, Pruflas became happy as well.

"Aye, you can say it's fine because we are steadily receiving requests to produce weapons from Lord-sama. I won't mind you taking some with you, if you are pleased with them." (Pruflas)

Pruflas, who stood up, took Vaiya and moved to the testing room, that also functioned as storage, which existed within the work room.

The testing room, with its wide, bare ground, has countless weapons

and kimonos lined up on one wall. Most of them are made out of wood and iron, but there are also items with unknown materials on the right side that might have monster materials within.

“This is amazing. I have never seen something like this, even not at the training field of the knight order. Can I also hold them?” (Vaiya)

“Of course.” (Pruflas)

The first thing Vaiya held after receiving permission was the kusarigama. After gazing at the sickle, he intently stares at its chains and the counterweights with their pointed ends with great interest.

“A strangely formed... weapon, is it?”`(Vaiya)

“Seems so. I repaired it several times, however it was interesting at the time I was shown the place where it was used for testing.” (Pruflas)

Though he had heard about the way to use it, it was said that you could swing the end part of the chain, hit with its weight, cut with the sickle and throw and pull with it. Vaiya wasn’t able to understand most of it.

Furthermore, beginning with the suntetsu and sansetsukon and arriving at the tokko and caltrop, he couldn’t imagine how to use those.

Because Pruflas was able to explain about the shuriken and the jitte for enforcing orders and regulations, Vaiya earnestly and carefully listened to him without missing anything. He tried to throw the shuriken several times to test it.

“Such small and hand-held weapon with high adaptability is great. It can be used by guards within the castle...” (Vaiya)

“If you are interested in it, it’s fine to ask that arrogant Caim.” (Pruflas)

The name of an unexpected person appeared at this place from Pruflas. Vaiya tilted his head to the side.

“Caim-dono, it is?” (Vaiya)

Even Pruflas himself considers the question, why the name of that civil official appeared here, to be strange.

“That expressionless arsehole knows the basic details of the weapons in this place. It seems he was taught the way of using them to some degree by the feudal lord. He is practising his usage of the shuriken and kusarigama in this testing room every morning.” (Pruflas)

Furthermore it appears that the other civil official slaves practise here sometimes as well.

“Aren’t they slaves, and even more civil officials? Why are they training?” (Vaiya)

“I don’t know. I don’t care since I wasn’t told about it. If you are worried about it, go and ask them directly.” (Pruflas)

“Haa.” (Vaiya)

Vaiya was bad with the type of person like Caim. He couldn’t keep up a conversation with Caim, who doesn’t show his emotions on the surface, since he doesn’t know what he’s thinking about.

“Well, since I gave you the permission to come and go here, it’s fine if you do as you like.” (Pruflas)

“Thank you very much.” (Vaiya)

“Please stop. I’m a slave as well and will be troubled if a knight like you bows his head to me.” (Pruflas)

Vaiya smiles bitterly as he is watching the back of the leaving Pruflas who is laughing.

“I can’t see the slaves here as slaves at all.” (Vaiya)

Pulling himself together, he decided to go meet with Caim. He considered to adopt these weapons in the Royal Knight Order.

☺ ☻ ☺

The guards in the border fortress on Horant’s side still hadn’t been replaced. Although it’s uncertain whether the previously killed group was the guard unit, there are no soldiers at all.

In the vicinity of the fortress the common people, apparently families

and couples, were sitting in countless groups.

Once he passed the border on the highway while riding on his horse, there are soldiers properly standing guard on Orsongrande's side.

"Earl Tohno-sama! Welcome home!" (Soldier)

The two soldiers, apparently on guard duty, greeted him while smiling. They probably were able to earn some good income during the time of Hifumi's invasion in Horant.

"Ah, the refugees from Horant won't come following from behind?" (Hifumi)

"Yea, currently there are only people who have no permission to enter our country..." (Soldier)

As it is there's no person in charge on Horant's side to hand out authorization and identification papers. As one would expect, they can't enter the country without permission. Except for the merchants, who have a permit, they will be continuously denied entry.

"Then let the refugees heading for the territory of Fokalore pass through. Those guys will become citizens of my place." (Hifumi)

The soldiers exchanged glances.

"Is it fine to do a verbal, unsubstantiated assertion?" (Soldier)

"I don't care. I will accept them, if they can come to my territory by themselves." (Hifumi)

"In such case, affirmative." (Soldier)

Since it's also alright to enter the territory over there, Hifumi handed over a suitable gratuity for them to go calling out whether there are any candidates.

One of them remained while the other ran off to Horant's side in high spirits. Probably the awareness of the borders will fade away if I tear them down once?

"Well, then I leave the rest to you." (Hifumi)

“Ha!” (Soldier)

Once again he spurs on his horse.

As he is steadily travelling on the highway, there are too many merchants waving their hands at him.

People, who are living in the capital, and people, who are sensitive to information, began to spread Hifumi’s appearance and figure as well as even the strangely formed sword affixed to his waist.

One part among them are adventurers, who have strange tastes in fashion, and people who get carried away easily. There are also people imitating him by handling a single edged sword. Of course, many of those swords are crude while being only thin making them nonsensical to use. Cases of people losing their lives during battles with monsters due to those breaking are occurring as well.

Even a part of the newcomers in the capital’s guild are using a thin, single-edged sword, but among those people, who know about the incident of veterans being killed in the guild, there are those who regard the katana as object of dread.

Hifumi waves appropriately and returns waves. Although young women and young women, who boarded carriages, raise shrill voices upon seeing him, Hifumi, who is travelling on horse, passes them by while ignoring them irresponsibly.

“If I become suitably popular, it will likely gather money and people in the territory. Although I want to prepare an expedition again as well.” (Hifumi)

“I want to make that and I haven’t touched this in a while”, while thinking about tools and weapons for Pruflas to make once he returned to the territory, he steers his horse to gallop towards Münster.

☺ ☻ ☺

“Ah~... this is the most relaxing place.” (Sabnak)

“Sabnak... no, I mean, captain. Is it fine to take your dinner at such

place? Shall we have a maid carry it to your own room within the castle?"

In the dining hall intended for knight ranks within the castle, Sabnak was enjoying dinner time with his companions, who transferred from the Third Knight Order to the Royal Knight Order, at one table.

"It's okay to address me without honorifics unless it's an official place. Not using honorific language is fine, too. It still doesn't feel real after all." (Sabnak)

As it's only food eaten by nobility, the menu is picky about seasoning and ingredients, but the dishes intended for knights are plentiful in quantity as well.

There is a relaxed atmosphere as if in a club room for extracurricular activities. If one protects the minimum of manners, it's a peculiar place where no one will annoy you.

While stuffing his cheeks with loads of salad and grilled fish, Sabnak laughed with a face, that has gone beyond relaxing and is now slackening.

"The child of a maid, eh... ? Which reminds me, I didn't hear her name yet." (Sabnak)

As Sabnak mutters this, his colleagues laughed while dipping bread in a tartar sauce made out of root crops and meat.

"You are a heartless guy. Aren't they daughters of some nobles, if you talk about the maids within the castle? It will get scary later, if she's the daughter of some high-ranking noble."

"Of noble origin, eh?" Sabnak remembered the face of his maid. She has dark blue hair and pupils in the same colour. Her appearance is put in order plainly.

"But you know... how do you call it? She's eerie." (Sabnak)

His colleague lowered his eyebrows.

"What are you saying in spite of being able to interact normally with Earl Tohno?"

"It's slightly different from that." (Sabnak)

“I don’t quite understand”, the knight at his side shrugs his shoulders. Midas came from somewhere and sat down.

“Let me intrude.” (Midas)

“Eh? Midas-san... no, I mean vice-captain-dono.” (Sabnak)

A dining hall staff member came pushing a wagon, lined up the dishes in front of the sitting Midas and left.

“Midas is okay. ... It’s a bad point that there is too much of the food here.” (Midas)

Sabnak threw a question at Midas, who put the spoon into the stew.

“It is difficult for me to say it, but didn’t you usually go home to eat your wife’s home cooking? What’s wrong today?” (Sabnak)

“Whose fault do you think it is?” (Midas)

Glaring at Sabnak, he eats a mouthful of the stew. He considered his wife’s cooking to be delicious.

“Due to the guarding of the coronation ceremony, all of the guarding outside the castle has been dumped on the knight order. I became the one responsible for that. Thanks to that, it doesn’t look like I will return home until midnight.” (Midas)

“Huh? Haven’t you arranged for a house near the royal castle after you became a vice-captain, Midas-san? Can’t you go home for just eating?” (Sabnak)

“Yea, more or less I did prepare it, but... my wife and me refused because we couldn’t calm down with its too big size.” (Midas)

“Ah, I know that feeling. There was a room prepared for me within the castle, however having three rooms and even a bathroom for myself... I wondered whether I should return to the dormitory for singles.” (Sabnak)

“Before we became aware of it, the knight order has turned into the den of the commoners faction”, their knight colleagues ended up laughing unintentionally.

“Rather than the matter of my house, it’s more about the case of the maid attached to Sabnak you talked about before.” (Midas)

“What’s wrong with her?” (Sabnak)

“She is called by the name Sibylla Winger (T/N: Shibiyura Vinja). It would be better if your properly remembered it.” (Midas)

“… Why does Midas-san know about her name though?” (Sabnak)

Midas, who put down the spoon, closed his eyes and let out a deep sigh.

“By chance I ran into the prime minister. He told me to convey his regards, if I meet you by chance, Sabnak.” (Midas)

“Why does the prime minister…” (Sabnak) (T/N: Aren’t we rather slow, Mr. Sabnak?)

“Don’t you know the full name of Prime Minister Adol?” (Midas)

“I know at least that much.” (Sabnak)

Even though he replied pridefully, it took Sabnak full 10 minutes to remember.

“Umm… it was Adol Phyiol Winger-sama, right? Eh? Winger…” (Sabnak)

“She is the only daughter of the prime minister. And at the same time she is the niece of the current head of the Marquis Winger household.” (Midas)

“Eh… but she said something about marrying into money and power…” (Sabnak)

His trembling fork hits the salad bowl with a clacking.

“At the time Adol-sama was appointed to his duty as prime minister, in order to not make it seem like his family’s home is being favoured, he gave up on his family status as Marquis family. That’s why his daughter isn’t a noble to be precise.” (Midas)

“There’s no doubt that she would marry into money and power”, his colleagues, who heard that, laughed, though it isn’t a laughing matter for

Sabnak at all.

“H-However, I ran away from the earldom myself. It’s also not like I will succeed as the third son...” (Sabnak)

The son of an Earl is treated as Associate Viscount, but with having a small annuity and possessing no territory, you almost can’t call them nobles. That situation is the reason why those below the second son of a noble are aiming to become military officers or civil officials. People, who became skilled as knights, were in a fortunate situation.

“Calm down, Sabnak. With your accomplishments so far and the good will of Imeraria-sama, you have reached the problematic status of captain of the Royal Knight Order. You can consider this as being raised to the same rank as your family’s home. ... With conditions attached.” (Midas)

“Conditions... it is?” (Sabnak)

Midas hesitated to continue for a short while, but he resigned himself when Sabnak glared at him.

“... The condition is to marry a partner that suits your rank and settle down with them.” (Midas)

“Well, you should be prepared that you won’t be able to idle around as single indefinitely”, while Midas warned Sabnak, his colleagues escaped in a hurry.

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Summary of Author’s notes:

There will be more of Sabnak since he was well received in the last chapter and the release pace will increase (T/N: though that doesn’t really matter to us).

Chapter 70: Runnin' With The Devil

"Damn it! Why does such strong monster appear near the highway!?"

The adventurer was barely able to fend off the tiger-like monster with its 2-meter-length, that brandished its sharp claws, with his sword. The long sword is already worn-out and chipped at several places and his leather armour has been torn off at the shoulders and arms.

"It should have been safe along the highway!"

They, who were delayed in their reaction towards the approaching enemy due to their negligence, aren't able to deal sufficiently with just a single monster opponent and have been forced into an one-sided, defensive battle.

"Let's escape for now! We can't handle this opponent!"

A female adventurer, who was in a slightly distant location holding her magic wand, shouted.

With her robe covered in mud due to her falling down in the confusion, her expression is worn with fatigue after casting earth magic many times over.

"Stand up and run away! What are you doing!?"

No matter how they think about it, the monster is fast and has also stamina left.

"Because I will snare its feet with magic one more time, during that time..."

"If you are going to do it, be quick about it!"

Even during this exchange, the man standing in front as vanguard is slowly getting injured.

"... Burst open, earth!"

Probably because the cast was done in a hurry, the monster is only stricken by a small scale of soil, but luckily it hit the eyes of the monster as planned.

“Gyaaa!”

Having lost its sight, the monster is shaking its head and thrashing around in agony.

The couple of adventurers, who judged this to be a gap, ran towards the highway side-by-side after having looked at the monster’s state.

Once they reached the highway after fleeing desperately and saw other adventurers and the wagons of merchants as well, they ended up sitting down together feeling relieved over the presence of the monster not chasing them.

“pants... can’t run anymore...”

The female adventurer, breathing heavily, clung to her wand.

She worriedly looked at the face of the adventurer, whose breathing calmed down to some degree, at her side.

“... What’s wrong?”

“At the time the monster thrashed around earlier, I saw something weird.”

“Something weird?”

Picking up a branch of a tree, he drew a circle with a triangle in the centre on the ground.

“It looked like this... probably some magic tool?”

“A monster shouldn’t have such a thing like a magic tool, now should it?”

Throwing away the branch, the adventurer looked in the direction of the woman.

“That’s right. In other words, that means someone embedded it in the monster. It’s the first time I hear about such big monster coming out in this area...”

Both of them look at each other, muster some energy and get up.

“Let’s report this to the guild. I think this is quite a big problem.”

“Right, I agree.”

A single small woman stepped in front of the two, who tried to start walking away.

To the vicinity she appears to be a magician as she is wearing a robe, but she doesn’t possess a wand.

“It’s unnecessary to contact the guild.”

Her facial expressions are lacking however she has a lovely face after taking off the hood. She doesn’t do anything but observing the adventurers with her green pupils without a change in her expression.

“... Who are you?”

Clasping the sword, which is riddled all over with chips in its blade, the adventurer set up his stance in order to protect his companion.

“I’m called Origa.” (Origa)

Doing a courteous bow, Origa looks directly into the eyes of the adventurer.

“To be honest, I didn’t think you would end up discovering the magic tool this easily either. It’s absolutely necessary to come up with something better for the next. Also, it was out of my calculations that you would be able to use the sword better than I expected.” (Origa)

“But then again, you are not at the level to even reach the sole of my master’s feet”, she continues.

“Y-You have spurred on that monster!?”

“I was simply close-by when it happened. No more than that. Though I intended for you to kill it as it is, I ended up wasting time needlessly thanks to you.” (Origa)

Opening the iron-ribbed fan with a sound of sploosh, she conceals her mouth with it and squints.

“Uoo!”

The adventurer, who judged her to be an enemy due to her words,

slashed at her straight away deciding that she is a magician without a wand.

However, she nimbly parries 2, 3 slashes with the iron-ribbed fan.

“It’s useless, you know? Although you are swinging your sword, you hips possess no stability. You are throwing your body together with the sword off balance each time. It’s something I often cautioned a close friend of mine about too.” (Origa)

While saying this, she strongly hits the adventurer’s nose.

The adventurer, who retreated back temporarily due to the pain and shock, clenched his teeth while blood was running from his nose.

“One way or the other I consider it, but it is a weapon after all? I judged you to be a magician, but I misread it...”

“There’s no mistake. I’m a magician.” (Origa)

Swapping the iron-ribbed fan into her left hand, she holds out her right hand in front of her.

“! Watch out!”

The man, who instinctively sensed the danger, covers the woman by turning his back on Origa.

In the next second the man’s back is cut deeply. He collapsed in the puddle of blood he had produced himself.

“Eh?”

In front of the woman, who couldn’t even react now, the opened iron-ribbed fan was swung at the time she finally perceived Origa.

“Too slow.”

The woman’s head fell before they eyes of the man, who was barely conscious. Her facial expression was that of not having been able to understand anything.

“Fuck... why...”

Once she made sure that these became the man’s final words, Origa

surveyed the surroundings.

The territorial soldiers from Fokalore are assembling by running quickly.

“Are there any witnesses?”

“There are none left. We disposed of them all.”

“Then go to the place of the monster that had been put to sleep before and dispose of it as well. It’s a problem if it can be seen from outside. Next time incise the chest and bury it deep within.” (Origa)

Once they had dumped the corpse of the man in a thicket close to the highway, Origa commands the soldiers and leaves the highway.

“Hifumi-sama... I will show you that I can definitely accomplish this task...” (Origa)

Her muttering vanished due to being covered by the sound of pushing aside the weeds without anyone hearing it.

☺ ● ☺

Only limited people within the castle, such as the knight orders and a part of the civil officials, were told about the princess’ coronation.

That’s for the sake of changing all the arrangements depending on the negotiations with Hifumi.

“So, because the report of my victory will happen at the same time as the coronation ceremony, I will have to guard Imeraria while at it?” (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who finally arrived at the capital, came to the royal castle after being called out by a soldier.

The two people, who are sounding out Hifumi, are Prime Minister Adol and Sabnak, who became the captain of the Royal Knight Order.

Hifumi looked at both’s tensed expression as he was sitting in the sofa in front of them and tasting the black tea.

“I want to return home quickly since I also got further plans though...”

(Hifumi)

"It's not like I won the war if I only killed as fit without caring about victory or anything else", Hifumi says.

"If I heard correctly, you have also reorganised the knight orders. There is probably no opposing faction left. Is guarding actually necessary?" (Hifumi)

"There is still some opposition left. We were able to drive it out to some degree, but..." (Sabnak)

He answered in a rush, but doesn't continue after Hifumi glares at him.

"Don't rely on external people for that degree of troubles. I think it's it's only natural to first use your own skills and structures." (Hifumi)

"Uu..." (Sabnak)

In all honesty, given that we aren't able to catch up with the replacements of the diminished number of knights due to the big battles with Hifumi and the war with Horant, I want the sole cause of it, Hifumi, to follow-up, but the decrement of our knights is substantially the payment for our own mistakes, Sabnak is understanding that as well.

Although the other side will understand it if we request it with reason, the problem was the reason being riddled with holes to stab at. (T/N: Author phrased it more elegantly as in putting in tsukkomi's in a comedy routine, but that is difficult to understand without the Japanese culture as backing knowledge, so localized it)

When he steals a glance at the prime minister sitting next to him, it becomes apparent that he intends to leave the entire situation to Sabnak. Although he somehow understands about the aim behind that, Sabnak doesn't want to know of it.

"It will be different if they stand in my way, but don't make things convenient by making me deal with your enemies." (Hifumi)

"We don't intend to do that, but..." (Sabnak)

While he was choosing his next words, the Knight Order Captain

Lotomago knocked and entered the room.

Lightly nodding towards the prime minister and Sabnak, Lotomago turned to Hifumi and bowed very deeply.

“I’m the former Third Knight Order’s captain and the present knight order’s captain, Lotomago. I was informed about Hifumi-dono visiting the castle and came in order to extend my deep apology.” (Lotomago)

Staying silent, Hifumi affirmed the wish of Lotomago, who requested to be present here, by nodding.

“Thank you very much.” (Lotomago)

Lotomago, who had Sabnak yield him the seat directly in front of Hifumi, makes eye contact with Hifum as soon as he sits down.

“First off, Pajou, who had been my subordinate, and, although from a different order, our country’s knight orders caused you troubles. As someone in charge of managing this country’s knight orders, I wish to express my apology.” (Lotomago)

“Apologies are not necessary. All of them compensated for their mistakes with their lives. It’s fine with that.” (Hifumi)

Lotomago bowed his head twice due to Hifumi’s words.

“And, while being aware of my rudeness, I have a single request.” (Lotomago)

“If it’s about the guarding, I just now refused it though?” (Hifumi)

Being glanced at, Sabnak cast his eyes down.

“I don’t expect Hifumi-dono to act as guard personally. After all that’s the job of our knights and soldiers.” (Lotomago)

Upon Lotomago’s words Sabnak became even smaller. The prime minister awkwardly turned his face away.

“We are indebted to Hifumi-dono for Münster. There is a person called Vaiya, formerly affiliated to the Second Knight Order. Now he has attained a very high rank as vice-captain of the Royal Knight Order below

Sabnak here, however... After he returned to the capital accompanying Hifumi-dono's territorial soldiers of Fokalore, he told me a great story." (Lotomago)

He wets his mouth by drinking the new black tea brought by a maid.

"I'm told that they are adopting unique training regimens and battle techniques following Hifumi-dono's guidance and that the result of that guidance also led to the successful defensive battle of Arosel." (Lotomago)

"Hee..." (Hifumi)

Hifumi, who showed a stern facial expression that could be even interpreted as pouting, laughed happily after hearing this story.

"Vaiya, huh? I'm remembering him. I considered him to have a good judgement, but it looks like has good eyes as well." (Hifumi)

"Therefore, while we will guard the castle, I want to request Hifumi-dono to guide the knight orders and the soldiers, but what do you think about that? Actually there is also the fact of Vaiya going to Hifumi-dono's territory to ask for coaching." (Lotomago)

"This request is from Sabnak as well", says Lotomago. Together with the prime minister, the three bowed formally.

"... I guess it's fine. If it's one week, I will make some time. I don't mind if you participate in the training in the territory either. From the beginning I told you that it is your free decision without hiding anything." (Hifumi)

Sabnak lifted his head quickly all smiles.

"T-Thank you very much!" (Sabnak)

"However, you will have to accept the conditions I'm going to tell you now." (Hifumi)

And then he gave his conditions.

– Everyone will obey Hifumi's instructions. The removal of defying people will be left to Hifumi.

– Construction work within the castle will be led by him as well.

– 30 territorial soldiers will be called to the capital and lodging will be prepared for them.

“Removal of defying people means…” (Adol)

As the prime minister timidly voiced his concern, Hifumi laughed scornfully.

“Be relieved, I won’t go as far as killing them if they don’t try to oppose me directly.” (Hifumi)

“Then there’s no problem.” (Lotomago)

Lotomago said plainly.

“C-Captain…” (Sabnak)

“I’m not your captain anymore. Get a grip of yourself.” (Lotomago)

“I-I’m sorry…” (Sabnak)

Lotomago corrected his seating position.

“I have heard about it from Vaiya. I heard you place importance on the cooperation in the movement of the troops. If there is someone obscuring that, they will go through a bitter experience. If they are hindrance even after that, they should be quickly removed, I think.” (Lotomago)

“Because drawing Her Majesty the Queen’s guard and the castle’s defence away isn’t entertainment for the nobles'”, Lotomago said.

“Well, then let’s begin from tomorrow. Gather those scheduled to guard within the castle and its surroundings. Summon the carpenters in the afternoon.” (Hifumi)

“Please take care of us.” (Sabnak)

While bowing once again, Sabnak became depressed that he himself would be required to participate as well.

☺☻☺

In the hands of Vaiya, who arrived at Caim’s location, he grasped the

shuriken and kusarigama he had borrowed from Pruflas.

“Caim-dono, it would be a great help, if you could spare some time for me, however...” (Vaiya)

Vaiya, who knows about the busy style of the civil official slaves after his stay here for a few days, shyly called out to Caim.

Caim, looking at his figure in silence, forced all the documents he held onto Duelgar*, who was coincidentally drawing up official papers in the room. (T/N: *name change from Doelgar, author miss or I missed something here)

“O-Oi!?” (Duelgar)

“Handle this please.” (Caim)

Since even Duelgar knew that a slave can’t decline a request of a knight, who is a noble, he reluctantly decided to take hold of the documents.

Ascertaining that expressionlessly, Caim stands in front of Vaiya once more.

“So, what’s the intention behind your business?” (Caim)

“A-Ah. What’s this... ?” (Vaiya)

Caim nodded once due to Vaiya showing the kusarigama and shuriken anew.

“It’s a replica of the weapons used by Lord-sama and Origa-sama. Those things are called kusarigama and shuriken. I’m not very well-informed about weapons, but I’ve heard that these are rare things you won’t even find in foreign countries.” (Caim)

“I’ve been told by Pruflas-dono that Caim-dono is skilled with these weapons. Given that I want to incorporate these weapons in the knight order if possible, I considered to receive Caim-dono’s guidance.” (Vaiya)

“Certainly.” (Caim)

Not only Vaiya was surprised by Caim’s immediate reply, but even Duelgar, who heard it unintentionally, was.

“P-Please wait a moment! The work won’t proceed if Caim goes missing!” (Duelgar)

“Lord-sama…” (Caim)

Raising his right hand to rein in Duelgar, Caim calmly says,

“… wants to actively promote the skills of administrating a territory and the combat techniques of this Tohno territory. Our decentralized deployment has been included within this plan. It will be worrisome if the tasks are delayed with only me not being here. Besides, it’s not like I will use the whole day for it.” (Caim)

“O-Of course. If you can help me for 2 or 3 days, it will be most helpful, I think.” (Vaiya)

“Then, let’s carry out the training session in the mornings. I will find a location. Let’s have Pruflas arrange for several weapons, too.” (Caim)

Vaiya, smiling all over his faces, shook hands with Caim due to the unexpectedly favourable terms, however Duelgar wondered with teary eyes whether his workplace, that had finally calmed down, became a thing of the past.

“Duelgar, please explain the matter to the other civil officials tomorrow morning.” (Caim)

“… Understood.” (Duelgar)

I absolutely can’t imagine how I’m to escape the future of “Why didn’t you stop him?” from female camp. Even under normal circumstances, with the bad-tempered Miyukare at the top, there’s no doubt that tomorrow’s morning will become a great disaster. Rather than this, I prefer to do any work, Duelgar thought with a gloomy expression as he faced the documents.

Chapter 71: Faint

Early morning.

On the excessively spacious practise field of the soldiers, located in the outskirts of the capital, the knights, with exception of those on public order duty, gathered. The figures of Royal Knight Order Captain Sabnak, Knight Order Captain Lotomago and Knight Order Vice-Captain Midas are there as well.

All members number 60, including one part being newcomers. It's no more than a third or less of the numbers from their golden age, but although the veterans feel lonely, the gathering of this many knights all at once is rare as well.

In front of them, not knowing when it was built, a simple hut, that was only the frame of an one-story house with walls and door installed, was standing.

Coming out from that hut is the Earl, whose name and face is now known by anyone from the knight orders, Hifumi.

"Good morning." (Hifumi)

""Good morning, sir!""

Once Hifumi nodded due to completing the greetings, staff members from the royal castle distributed the weapons they brought along.

Those are wooden short spears that have a length of reaching up to the chest of an adult man.

"Those were made out of wood in order to practise using short spears during the patrolling within the castle. They have no weight, however it will probably be fine if you only learn the style for starters. Each of you will take the one you're holding home and bring it back for the next time we train." (Hifumi)

Once everyone got a weapon, Hifumi pointed at the frame-only building.

“For now we haven’t been able to make more than one house, but the plan is to build two more of them.” (Hifumi)

“For what the heck will those be used?” (Sabnak)

Due to Sabnak’s question, Hifumi said “It will be faster if I show you” and had three people enter into a room of the frame-only house.

And then he enters holding a short spear himself as well.

“For the time being, the three inside, attack me at the same time. No worries, I will go easy on you.” (Hifumi)

Thanks to that line, the knights, who were pride of being the elite, although they were assembled at random, angrily set up their spears.

“Thank you. I judged that your experience of fighting indoors is small. It’s faster to show you the way to answer your question.” (Hifumi)

Lightly gripping the spear in his right hand, Hifumi is waiting for the three to come attacking.

As on of them stabs with his spear, he lightly avoids that by taking a distance in order to push it away with his foot and then says,

“There are three of you for a reason. Synchronize your breathing.” (Hifumi)

While saying this, he leisurely moves to the centre of the room.

“First off, at this point they fail. Do you know why?” (Hifumi)

“Me?” (Knight)

The singled-out knight, who was observing from the outside, let a nervous voice escape.

“Umm... is it about the situation of Earl Tohno moving to the centre of the room?” (Knight)

“Since it looks like you didn’t understand the entire reason, your answer is only half right.” (Hifumi)

While he is explaining, the three are surrounding Hifumi.

They come stabbing at the same time at the place they estimated they would be able to encircle him, but they can't seize Hifumi.

As he passes through a gap between the knights, he lightly brushes one's flanks with the edge of the wooden spear.

"Look, with this, one of you was done in." (Hifumi)

"As expected, if it's only three knights..."

"What are you saying! If there were 5 or 6 of them in the confined space, they would lose the ability to move about." (Hifumi)

"Uh..."

After that Hifumi instructed them in stuff such as defence and clearing an encirclement by using all the furnishings like shelves, the building's walls and the pillars.

At the beginning especially the knights formerly affiliated with the Second Knight Order were complaining about his sneaky and wait-and-see movements, however after repeatedly doing battles against him in groups of three their dissatisfaction naturally vanished as they saw its distinct effectiveness.

Their honesty about this seems to also be due to the Second Knight Order having actually experienced real combat to some degree.

"For a while you will use this hut for training in turns. The remaining groups will fix their training on how to use a spear." (Hifumi)

There are several of the many techniques, shown by Hifumi, the knights already knew. In addition to the thrusting techniques of the knight's spearmanship, they are furthermore training technical strikes by using the spear's pummel to entangle an opponent and lastly there are even references how to use the spear for throwing it.

As all of that was crammed into them within just the morning, the most the knights could do was to learn the things without being able to say whether they would able to apply it or not.

Furthermore.

“These are the basics. You have to leverage your indoor combat by memorizing these movements within three days.” (Hifumi)

The knights sat down and started to discuss as Hifumi said this much and quickly left towards the castle. The enthusiastic Lotomago is lying on the ground with his head facing up as his body can’t follow up on the movement. He has an extremely relieved facial expression.

“... If we don’t do it, it will be bad, right?” (Lotomago)

Sabnak shakes his head due the words of his colleague.

“You can’t say it’s fine to not do it. At least, I believe it to be necessary for the sake of finishing the upcoming coronation ceremony without problems as person in charge. Also, if you want to take care of your subordinates’ lives, there’s likely no other way but go through with it.” (Sabnak)

“For that reason we have no other choice but to take the lead”, Sabnak said as he put strength into his knees and stood up.

☺ ☻ ☺

Starting from Horant’s capital Adolamelk, the country fell into a temporary, great chaos.

On top of having an enemy invade the royal castle and significant damage to the military forces occurring, troops from a foreign country have been stationed in the capital. Moreover, the situation is that they are essentially training the soldiers from Horant.

Furthermore, even the magic tool research institution, which was run by the state, has been damaged. The amount of money they had to pay to the Tohno territory, located within Orsongrande, as reparation isn’t a low amount by no means either.

Naturally this caused dissatisfaction among the nobles dedicated to their country. Movements of opposition against the quite weakened royalty started to emerge, but for some reason just at that timing ... the reports of ferocious monsters increased. Together with the appearance of people, who didn’t seem to feel any pain, the nobles had their hands full

just dealing with the territories in this confusing state.

And while the nobles had to accept their confinement to indoors, Horant's national army, whose core units were stationed in Adolamelk, were trained and taught about technologies by the territorial soldiers of Fokalore, led by Alyssa, in order to improve their strength to a certain degree to compensate for the decreased number of soldiers.

Even if some noble somewhere revolted right now, they wouldn't be able to rival the capital to make it surrender at all.

"... I guess it's fine to say that we completely lost." (Suprangel)

While looking at those reports, Suprangel sighed deeply.

Although he himself is the king, his way of inviting soldiers of an enemy nation will give birth to a considerably backlash. Although he had prepared himself for the case of protest coming from someone skilled, the authority of the king was strengthened, the power of the nobles was weakened and the capital was flourishing, if you looked at the results.

In order to increase the distribution channels for magic tools, the number of merchants coming and going from Orsongrande have increased and thus the tax yields grew as well. To some degree they are even able to recover the part, they had to pay as reparation.

"What about the guests from Fokalore?" (Suprangel)

"Haa! The soldiers from Orsongrande haven't caused any particular problems. ... Rather, since they are distributing the edible parts of monsters, they caught, every day on the market and as they are strangely fine to pay money, they seem to be accepted by the citizens around the castle."

The young man, who reported this slightly unpleasantly, is a distant relative of the king and calls himself Nelgal (T/N: >> Nerugaru <<).

As consequence of uncovering many royals cooperating with the royal grandson Veldore, quite a few of them had been exiled or disposed of. Although I summoned this able young man close-by to install him as heir even if his blood is thin, he still has some time of training ahead,

Suprangel is thinking.

“There aren’t only bad things about this situation either. If the population is delighted and prospers, it will become the country’s wealth. Rather, what we should be worried about is the soldiers from Fokalore leaving from here.” (Suprangel)

“What do you mean?” (Nelgal)

“If a shadow is cast on the state and public order of the capital after they are gone, the people and nobles will likely consider us royals to be incompetent. Even if it became as it had been before, once they learn about a good state, anything below that won’t be permitted anymore.” (Suprangel)

After Nelgal nodded as he seemed to have understood, he started to ponder about something dropping his line of sight a bit.

The king leisurely waits for him.

“My king, there is a single thing I want to request from you, but…” (Nelgal)

“I shall allow it. Let’s have you try saying it.” (Suprangel)

“I would like you to dispatch me to Fokalore. I have heard in many places of things such as many people gathering in the territory of Fokalore in order to study including the administration of a territory. If you deem it acceptable to approve, my humble opinion is that I’d like to study those subjects as soon as it possible.” (Nelgal)

Due to his suggestion Suprangel unintentionally showed a smile.

“I see. I heard that the land, governed by that man, is growing rapidly. I guess it wouldn’t be pointless by no means.” (Suprangel)

“Then!” (Nelgal)

“Hmm…” (Suprangel)

He thinks about the circumstances of the man called Hifumi.

The man who came to an unknown world. What will he destroy in this

world? What will he create? Where will he go to?

Suprangel unsealed the letter that had been placed next to him. Its contents are information about the enthronement of a new king in Orsongrande.

“Very well. I will dispatch you to Fokalore, Nelgal.” (Suprangel)

“Thank you very much!” (Nelgal)

“I will also accompany you up until the capital of Orsongrande. There I will directly meet with the new king and ask them for your sake.” (Suprangel)

“G-Going this far for me…” (Nelgal)

Something like the king leaving his country is unprecedented in Horant. Even in foreign countries it’s something that almost never happens.

Nelgal started to fluster as it became quite a serious matter.

“It’s fine. Now that I recall, you could say I took lessons from my predecessor as well.” (Suprangel)

He swings the letter from before causing a fluttering sound.

“Also, if I only look at this scrap of paper, I won’t understand anything. It is necessary to actually check things with my own eyes to comprehend them. If I had a wider outlook and discernment, things might not have led to Veldore dying either…” (Suprangel)

“My king…” (Nelgal)

“The troops of that man were accompanied by a considerably high-ranking officer. Let’s ask for their cooperation in entering Orsongrande.” (Suprangel)

“Let’s learn a lot of things by looking together at this vast world”, Suprangel laughed.

☺ ☻ ☺

Around the time the knight orders spilled sweat and other things due to Hifumi’s gruelling training in the practise area of the capital, Vaiya, who

was in the testing ground inside the dwarves' workshop within Fokalore, was tumbling about on the ground while being smeared with dirt.

"There is such kind of motion..." (Vaiya)

"As it is the first time for me to handle this weapon-like arm, I'm not able to explain the difference." (Caim)

While panting lightly, Caim answered expressionlessly as usual.

"First time... eh?" (Vaiya)

"Yes. After I received guidance by the Lord, I've been training on a daily routine." (Caim)

The kusarigama is clasped in Caim's hands. Holding the counterweight attentively, he has taken a stance of holding out the sickle in front of him.

"... Is it also the instruction of Earl Tohno to not lower your weapon even if your opponent has fallen?" (Vaiya)

"Yes. Even if the opponent seems to be helpless, I was told that it's the basic to confront them without being negligent." (Caim)

"I'm no match for you", Vaiya stands up while dusting off the dirt. He grabbed the sword which was lying nearby.

"You have splendidly broken my pride as a knight." (Vaiya)

Sheathing the sword, Vaiya took the kusarigama, he had received for his own use, into his hands.

"It's a strange weapon. However, on top of entangling my sword with the chains, you knocked my body down by pulling my feet away." (Vaiya)

Although it was the first time the other party used this weapon, Vaiya didn't think he would be this helpless.

To make matters worse, his opponent, far from being a soldier, is a civil official. It doesn't even seem like Caim has been training that much either.

"Once again, please, I want you to teach me how to use this weapon. I did understand that this is something extremely helpful for us." (Vaiya)

"... May I also ask for the reason?" (Caim)

"There is no other way to maintain order within the castle but to "kill" an enemy by using swords or spears. However, if we are able to efficiently use this kusarigama and the shuriken, we will be able to capture the enemy without having them get away or having to kill them. That will allow us to obtain information from the enemy as well." (Vaiya)

"If we are able to do that, it won't be impossible to deal with a situation before it becomes dangerous", Vaiya talked about his own thoughts.

He ended up blushing as he uncontentiously became passionate talking about it, but he still wanted to convey his enthusiasm.

Caim's expression, which he saw incidentally, was still arrogant but he moved his head vertically.

"I understand. I will teach you the technique as far as I know." (Caim)

"W-Well, then after this..." (Vaiya)

Caim slightly squinted due to Vaiya being impatient.

"That's right, for the sake of your goal, I heard from you, it probably won't be sufficient to only do one-on one training, and moreover with no one but only me." (Caim)

No sooner than he said that, more than 30 soldiers in groups showed up on the testing ground.

"Good morning!"

"Yes, good morning." (Caim)

The soldiers, quickly forming a line, are each carrying their own kusarigama in their hands. They have straightened their backs facing towards Caim.

Caim stands in front of them in a natural manner.

Caim talks in his usual flat voice to Vaiya, who doesn't understand what is happening.

"These are the people who received instructions from Lord-sama

together with me. For starters, we will drive the techniques, we know of, into Vaiya-sama." (Caim)

"Eh? Drive into me means..." (Vaiya)

To Vaiya it looked like Caim's eyes sparkled.

"From today onwards we will drive all of the "guidance", we received from Lord-sama, into you with all our power. ... Please be somehow careful to not die." (Caim)

"Haha... please don't be too hard on me..." (Vaiya)

I might have made a slight mistake in my choice of whom to ask for help, Vaiya considered.

Chapter 72: Miss You

After preparing for 3 days for the coronation ceremony, everyone was in a state of hurrying along regardless of their posts within the castle. The people, taking part in Orsongrande's national politics, didn't reveal the details of the ceremony until the very last moment either.

This is due to Hifumi's instruction. He has explained that it's for the sake of not giving the enemies time to prepare hindering them to make thorough plans. On the other hand the side of the defence has been drilled in the techniques required for their guard duty at a fast pace by Hifumi and he has also given the necessary directions for the construction works.

Although only the date of the ceremony has been officially announced, so that things like food stalls etc. could be prepared for the festival on the land near the castle, the time and the details of the ceremony, even now three days before the actual event, still haven't been released.

"So, why have even I been left out from the circle of the privy?" (Imeraria)

Imeraria asked in astonishment within her office.

Sabnak, handling paper work in the same room, raises his face due to Imeraria's muttering.

"Please do understand. Since you are the leading actor, we want you to solely focus on the ceremony itself, Imeraria-sama." (Sabnak)

"That excuse has been provided to you by Hifumi-sama anyway." (Imeraria)

"U..." (Sabnak)

I'm not amused, Imeraria honestly thought. By now it can't be helped anymore that he says such things due to Hifumi's influence, but the pillars of supporting me to become the ruler give off a strange vibe.

After giving a fleeting glance at Sabnak, who turned his back and sorted the documents without saying anything as if running away, she sighed heavily.

These last days Imeraria had been completely disconnected from any practical work. As it reached the point that Sabnak followed her around as bodyguard all the time, he quickly dealt with any official work before she became aware of it with the important financial affairs being the only exception.

Of course Imeraria has been doing the final checks, however since he finishes all of it in a way that leaves nothing to complain about, her only work is to look the documents over and sign them. As he handles all the work very quickly, the civil officials have apparently been delighted as well.

Although I have to admit his efficiency all the same, I'm slightly not amused that it has been Hifumi, who recognised Sabnak's abilities first and called him into the administration of his territory.

"Excuse me." (Adol)

It was Prime Minister Adol who came entering the office.

Since the time Sabnak is shadowing Imeraria, his help in dealing with the work and his hints have been gradually decreasing. He hasn't informed Imeraria of the exact reason for that, but he likely has some other goal in mind.

After giving a glance at the way Sabnak works, Adol made a retainer's bow in front of Imeraria. Finishing a respectful greeting, he brought out a letter addressed to Imeraria.

"From whom is it?" (Imeraria)

"It's from Earl Biron, your Majesty." (Adol)

"... Let me have a look." (Imeraria)

Listening to the letter from Biron, Sabnak also stops his hands and lines up next to Adol.

During the time she read through the letter, no one said anything.

“Sabnak-san.” (Imeraria)

“Ha!” (Sabnak)

“The king of Horant has personally visited Biron-san in Münster to propose negotiations and wants to attend my coronation ceremony without fail on this occasion.” (Imeraria)

“A-A foreign king, t-the coronation ceremony…” (Sabnak)

“It’s unprecedented.” (Adol)

It’s inevitable that the three people are brooding over it. Basically it’s unthinkable for a king to meet a fellow head of state in this world in the first place. Above a king being the national polity himself, it’s even rare for a king to leave his country as long as his country isn’t ruined.

“What’s his aim?” (Sabnak)

“Going by what Biron told me, he wants to interact with me from now on and talk about the post-war procedures. It seems he asked to pass on a message that he wants to request an exchange of technology through Hifumi-sama.” (Imeraria)

Although Imeraria tilted her head to the side asking “What kind of technology exchange is this about?”, Sabnak stroke his forehead with his right hand.

“Ah~ … At the time Hifumi-san entered Horant, the equipment of the troops of his own territory were delayed in getting into the country. Isn’t it likely that he is aiming for the same parts as Vaiya?” (Sabnak)

“… At any rate, I probably can’t afford to refuse him. Sabnak-san, please contact Biron-san and prepare to receive the king together with the prime minister and the collaborating guards. Let’s report this to Hifumi as well.” (Imeraria)

“As you wish.” (Sabnak)

“Which reminds me”, Imeraria realized.

“Even though Hifumi-sama is coming and going to the royal castle every day, I don’t see him. Somehow the number of knights being within the castle decreased too...” (Imeraria)

“Ah, that’s because he has the knights practising being on duty using the hidden pathways and the servant’s passages. Seeing that there are such passages within the castle, the royal castle of Orsongrande has a deep history as expected.” (Sabnak)

“... Though it’s the first time I heard about something like hidden pathways existing?” (Imeraria)

“Eh?” (Sabnak)

“Eh?” (Imeraria)

Imeraria and Sabnak were both surprised, while Adol hurriedly sneaked out of the office.

☺ ☻ ☺

While Hifumi visited the royal castle several times, he discovered a number of passages with an unnatural air.

There are the sideways used by the servants, but those are located in the ceiling and under the floor. There is a strange dead space between the walls.

While examining those by knocking on the wood used as cover, he found pathways and secret chambers, even apart from the servant’s passages, apparently intended as connected escape routes in places such as the hall, the audience hall, Imeraria’s office, the bedrooms of royalty, etc.

Since he found those at great troubles, it would be fine for the guards to use these pathways and he even established new camouflaged exits and entrances to a part of the pathways. He completed a network of secret pathways that even the master of Orsongrande’s royal castle didn’t know of.

Each place has a dormer window that also serves as peeking hole,

which can't be spotted from the hallways and rooms if one holds his breath in the pathways. Also, he put short spears and shurikens in shelves, which were placed midway, making sure that weapons are available in times of emergency at those places.

"So, if there's some guy who can be considered suspicious, you can check his words and behaviour like this and, if necessary, drag them in here and dispose of them." (Hifumi)

Taking along several of the knights practising to be on duty, Hifumi is explaining the details for the nth time. Given that there are already no knight here who are holding doubts towards Hifumi's abilities, there isn't any refusal either.

"Do you believe it to have some meaning to erase a target behind the scenes without uncovering them in public? Isn't it alright to openly defeat them, if we can prove the disturbing elements to have properly disappeared?"

"This depends on the objective. Excluding some sorts of performances, if, for example, you dealt with the masses badly, you might end up failing to give them a sense of security. However..." (Hifumi)

Pointing at the peeking hole in the gloomy pathway, Hifumi instructs all of them to look at the situation outside.

What can be seen is a mid-sized hall within the castle used for such things like parties.

"Try to think there was some kind of ceremony going on in this kind of place. Will you interrupt the ceremony just because one rat has evaded the observation? Do you believe it to be right as knights to boast your accomplishments while neglecting the princess just because you defeated a single enemy, who obstructed the upcoming coronation ceremony?" (Hifumi)

"That is..."

Of course there will be important ceremonies once the princess becomes the queen. It's unthinkable for them to use these as stepping

stones for the sake of raising achievements for themselves.

"To the very end, consider being a guard as job of working behind the scenes. Believe it to be just right, if there is no opportunity of publicly announce that "nothing happened." Besides, it would be probably better if you didn't go public on how they died at that time either." (Hifumi)

While endlessly continuing such explanations, they are moving around from one end to the other in order to fully grasp the hidden paths.

It's not just walking. While crawling around, they are training to move to not be noticed by anyone in the adjoining rooms and hallways by not producing any sounds.

Related to these things, the knights hailing from the former Third Knight Order are grasping the concepts a lot faster than those from the former Second Knight Order, too. Even Sabnak, who joined the first group to be guided, has learned the method of moving by grovelling on the ground without hesitation.

"All of you, don't talk. Let's now try to listen to the talks of the lot in this room." (Hifumi)

Upon Hifumi's words, the knights held their ears against the wall of the pathway quickly. The conversation of two men was audible to their ears.

"So, how's the coronation ceremony project going?"

"Don't know. The details of the ceremony still haven't been passed down to anyone but a selected few. On the contrary, even the princess doesn't seem to have been informed."

What the knights could see through the peeking hole were two middle-aged civil officials, appearing to be nobles, having a private chat in a small conference room.

"As the Second Knight Order was destroyed, the management of the event ended up being completely handled by the princess. As it is now, we will loose the ability to arrange the agreed positions for the other nobles."

"Don't be impatient. Rather than that, let's think about something

else."

"Don't be impatient? You should be a bit more tense! We already received the money. At this rate we will be killed by our client."

"Restrain your voice. If you consider the preparations of the venue and cooking, it won't be strange for them to announce it by today either. Since the number of knights has decreased, the number of knights on guard duty shouldn't yet be sufficient. It's probably possible to slip in as temporary guards there."

Although one person is pretending to be talking with composure, their voice is gradually trembling.

"... But, I heard the guards have been influenced by that Earl Tohno."

"What can a single person do anyway? Those sons of nobles, who bought their way in, will be defeated by trained rogues, even if they are accompanied by prestige."

"I see..."

Having listened up until there, the knights looked at each other's faces. They heard a conversation that could be regarded as completely wicked.

And everyone's view converged on Hifumi.

"You heard them. Well, if you deal with them secretly for argument's sake, do you think you will be able to kill their clients within the castle as well, if they gave away their client?" (Hifumi)

Showing them a demonstration, Hifumi quietly intrudes the room, where the two are still continuing their private talk, by entering through a hidden door.

"So, how many people have to infiltrate the castle at the very least?"

"It would be reasonably for many to be there. Please wait for a moment..."

The man, who was being asked, dropped his sight. In the moment he tried to take out a memo from his pocket, Hifumi plugged up the nose and mouth of the other man. While quickly dragging him below the desk, he

pressed down on his carotid artery with his free hand and made him faint that way.

“Oy, where did you go?”

As the man is looking around restlessly trying to find his companion, who can’t be seen anywhere, after raising his face, he was easily made to faint by Hifumi, who attacked from the back after getting up on his feet.

“It’s fine to come out.” (Hifumi)

The knights, coming out in groups, had their faces turn pale evenly.

Although the opponents weren’t military officers, it apparently caused a big shock to them how easily Hifumi strangled and defeated those two.

“It’s plenty even if you only cover up the nose properly. With only that you will suppress “sounds” quite well. It can be considered good, if you stay completely hidden. It’s very good if you aren’t discovered until the instant you defeat the first guy, if there are two opponents.” (Hifumi)

Following Hifumi’s instruction, they dragged the two blacked-out men into the dim hidden pathway.

“Train to be able to do these kinds of movements with a group of three. The group, who is able to do this smoothly, will arrest the “client” of these guys.” (Hifumi)

The knights showed a distinct determination due to these words. It looks like there is a considerable attitude of wanting to raise achievements as knight after all.

(If they improve well, it will become fun to fight these guys, too.) (Hifumi)

I will have them accumulate plenty of experience for now, Hifumi fired up himself.

☺ ☻ ☺

Adol’s daughter, Shibyura Winger, was fairly famous as being an excellent maid within the castle. Above that, she was famous among the other maids for being a woman indifferent to people of the same sex and

having scarce facial expressions.

Even so, she was continuing her work within the castle without minding the assessment of her surroundings. Accordingly she was an extreme individualist adhering only to her own accomplishments. The matter of her father being the prime minister didn't have much of an influence on that.

"... Cleaning complete." (Shibyura)

She finished cleaning Sabnak's office by herself, without borrowing the help of anyone today just as every day.

Recently the times of the master of this room being in the office of the princess have become long, but Shibyura considered this to make the cleaning easier.

The cleaning, that started with dusting off, was completed by even tending the furnishings and brushing the carpets. All that is left now is to throw away the trash.

The objective of her cleaning is the ideal of "the person being able to use it in a clean state without noticing it."

There are pens and documents scattering about on top of Sabnak's desk, that are unexpectedly difficult to sort in contrast to the speed of disposing of them. But even while wiping the desk, she perfectly keeps the things in the original state without having a single look into the documents.

She was satisfied the moment she was able to to keep the current state of before and after the sweeping without changing anything while cleaning it.

"He didn't come back today either." (Shibyura)

She puts back the washed tea set, which wasn't used today either, into the shelf in the plain cooking space, which takes up a small part of the office.

Checking the remaining quantity of tea and sugar, she memorizes the amount she has to take from the kitchen tomorrow morning.

With this her first job of the day finishes, but there is still plenty of time left. As far as people, who have a fixed and exclusive role attached to them like her, are concerned, they can freely decide the allocation of tasks, but as a type, who stays silent starting first in the morning, she has almost one hour time left every day.

"... Alright." (Shibyura)

Shibyura, who suddenly rolled around on the carpet with its long hairs, extends both arms straight ahead and rolls around to the right and left side. She enjoys the feeling of the carpet's hairs tickling her face and limbs.

And yet, her cleaning was to the degree that one can say she can keep up her appearance without getting the clothes dirty.

"Umm..."

Being called upon suddenly, Shibyura came to a halt as she looked upwards.

Once she shifted her sight timidly, it was Sabnak, who turned up from within the shadows of the cupboard.

"S-Sorry. I didn't intend to look at you, but once I observed you from the back, leaving or staying..." (Sabnak)

Although Sabnak slowly believed it to have been better to stay silent, he regretted that he didn't stay hidden until she left.

"Welcome back." (Shibyura)

She bows while laying on top of the carpet.

"Do you want to drink some tea?" (Shibyura)

"A-Ah... please." (Sabnak)

Watching Shibyura, who starts to prepare tea as if nothing has happened, Sabnak began to deal with the documents on his desk in relief.

The serving of tea, she did, was as splendid as usual.

"Please keep the matter from before secret. If you told this to anyone, it

would…” (Shibyura)

“I-It’s fine! I won’t tell anyone. No one will believe that an excellent maid such as yourself is doing something like that anyway!” (Sabnak)

“Understood. Then I will keep it a secret that you peeped at me as well.” (Shibyura)

“That’s far too scandalous!” (Sabnak)

He’s an interesting guy after all, Shibyura laughed within her mind.

Chapter 73: In My Place

Although those working within the castle are elites, the work of the maids starts early in the morning.

There are also cases of taking breakfast to the workplace of the nobles, they have been assigned to. Each of them is busy preparing as there are those, who will always complain about drinks in the morning, if it hasn't been prepared.

There are also many people, who are taking breakfast to their masters before the sun has risen in the dormitory of the girls. Dawn is crowded with maids reporting for work.

If you talk about Shibyura, who is assigned to Sabnak, you might say that she will be alright, if she takes it slow going to work.

Given that Sabnak has a long history of working in the provinces by himself, he will at least do basic cleaning and prepare tea in his spare time to get it done quickly. Having led a life of not being accustomed to take a person in his service like other nobles, Sabnak even rarely tells Shibyura to do this or that.

On the contrary, he isn't in the office since morning. Today's the same.

"Well, then let's start." (Shibyura)

Since basic work like cleaning has become her second nature, Shibyura repeated a fixed cleaning routine every day. She also has pride in tidying up all places, even dim rooms, within the castle.

"... It bothers me." (Shibyura)

Even such girl couldn't help to be worried about a place in the room since today morning.

Yesterday Sabnak suddenly appeared next to the cupboard.

He ended up dodging how he got into the room, but she knows that there is some secret concerning this cupboard.

Being bothered by it once, her hands have stopped cleaning and she has

turned her view to the shelves standing like that for around an hour.

“Let’s try examine it just a little bit.” (Shibyura)

And once she firmly pushed the wall right next to the cupboard, it opened.

“This is...” (Shibyura)

It’s an entrance where a knight wearing his armour barely fits through, but for the petite Shibyura it has plenty of size. As she peeks inside, she can see a dim passageway continuing onwards.

It’s even gloomier than the passageways used by the servants and maids, which Shibyura knows about as well. All over it gives an impression of being narrow. Standing alone midway, something like shelves has been installed.

Once she timidly stepped into the passageway, the door closed automatically.

As she touched the wall in panic, it opened just same as before. Shibyura took a breath.

(I wasn’t aware that there was such passageway.) (Shibyura)

The passageways used by the servants are, to the bitter end, for the sake of running through the hallways without being seen and also served as a short-cut to carry stuff like food hurriedly. They aren’t directly connected to a room.

If it’s possible to take an even better short-cut to the dining hall, it will become even easier to prepare the meals for Sabnak, with such feeling she advances through the hidden pathway.

“Don’t move.”

Shibyura was surprised to the degree of jumping up when she was suddenly called.

“Don’t shout. Slowly turn your face in my direction.”

Once she finished turning her face as ordered, she saw a person, she

had already seen somewhere, pointing a thin blade towards her.

“Tell me your name and affiliation.” (Hifumi)

“... I’m Shibyura Winger. I’m working as maid in the castle.” (Shibyura)

Having a weapon pointed at her for the first time in her life, her voice has been trembling even though she pretends to be calm.

“You appear to be Earl Tohno, right... ?” (Shibyura)

As Shibyura asked him that, Hifumi lowered his katana.

“That’s right. If I’m not wrong you were Sabnak’s maid. Why are you here?” (Hifumi)

Even though he has lowered his weapon, Hifumi’s look is sharp as usual as if seeking for gaps in Shibyura defence.

Although she hesitated for a moment, she honestly tells him that she was investigating the place of Sabnak’s coming and going out of curiosity, because he has also seen the place where she has been talking with Sabnak in the office.

“That guy is...” (Hifumi)

“It’s not like it’s highly classified information”, seeing Hifumi being in a huff, Shibyura casually observes him anew, wondering Is this the person that has been feared by everyone within the castle?

I don’t know to which country his clothing belongs and he has black pupils and black hair, I hadn’t seen anywhere else. Although his appearance looks to be young, no different from me, he also has continuously an even stronger, oppressive aura than father.

“Anyway, leave from here right away. If you were mistaken for an invader, you wouldn’t be even able to complain about getting killed.” (Hifumi)

“Kil... This is within the castle... ?” (Shibyura)

Hifumi shifts his attention towards Shibyura, who raised her voice unintentionally, as if seeing something strange.

“The place is irrelevant. Things, people, faith, all of it is fine. If you consider protecting something, you will have to get rid of hindrances without hesitation. Those, who are deceived by handicaps and helplessly fear that, are... idiots.” (Hifumi)

“And, since I will properly teach Sabnak about the importance of information, it’s fine for you to tell him to wait in his office at night”, Hifumi vanished to the other side of the gloomy passageway.

☺ ☻ ☺

At the time Hifumi was still secluding himself in the hidden pathways to confirm the structure within the castle, a messenger from Vichy arrived.

The man, calling himself an envoy of the central committee, has come to visit the royal capital leading around 10 attendants. Although it was a rude visit without even a previous arrangement, it was decided that he would be meeting the prime minister for the time being.

In the place being a room that is used as reception room within the castle, there are two knights standing in the back of the prime minister. Two soldiers, acting as attendants, are accompanying the envoy.

“It’s the first time for us to meet each other. I’m called Roshi and was dispatched by Vichy’s central committee. I’ve heard that new king will be enthroned in Orsongrande at this time. As representative of Vichy, I hurried to extend my congratulations.” (Roshi)

He handed over a list, which is recording handicrafts and fabrics native to Vichy in addition to magic tools apparently made in Horant, while telling “Please take this as a little gift.”

The prime minister noticed then, the envoy in front of me hasn’t realized that the quarrel between Orsongrande and Horant has mostly been settled already, now has he?

“Thank you very much for this. By the way, it’s not like we greatly advertised the coronation ceremony to that degree, but Vichy’s central committee seems to possess quite good ears.” (Adol)

Roshi's smile, that looked as if plastered onto him, wasn't disturbed by the words of Prime Minister Adol. He shook his head with a "No, no."

"Only by chance. We used the opportunity to ask a certain noble-sama of your country with whom we previously also had business discussions. Becoming aware of the matter with the coronation immediately after entering your country, I immediately got in contact with my own country in a hurry. I'm very sorry that the envoy is someone of my degree, but above all, I was told that it was likely quicker to use me for the celebration." (Roshi)

"Oh my goodness, you have experienced quite the troublesome journey. Please relax at ease until the coronation ceremony. We will prepare a room for you." (Adol)

"Then I will gladly take you up on your kind offer. And, is it possible to receive an audience with the new Majesty the Queen? If you don't mind it, I want to report all of this to the central committee, but..." (Roshi)

It came, huh? Adol thought. He wanted to avoid Imeraria getting in contact with him until he knows the objective of Vichy, if possible.

"The princess is busy with the preparations for the coronation ceremony. Once the ceremony finished, she might have a little bit time, but at this point in time, it's quite..." (Adol)

"That's right, isn't it. How regrettable." (Roshi)

"If it's alright with you, I will listen to the reason for your visit." (Adol)

Although he displayed a look of pondering over it for a bit due to Adol's question, Roshi easily gave a nod.

"That's right. If I'm able to discuss it with Your Excellency, the prime minister, in advance, it might be even better than conveying it while under stress of being in front of Her Majesty the Queen." (Roshi)

As he said this much, Roshi corrected his posture, surveyed his vicinity and began to speak in a lowered voice.

"Concerning the previous sorrowful quarrel, I want to officially propose

peace from Vichy. Now, if that's possible, the central committee is considering to enter a peace treaty between your country and the central committee..." (Roshi)

While still floating a smile on his lips, Roshi's eyes are piercing the prime minister.

"Of course we are the defeated side. Even regarding the reparations, I have the privilege of offering as much as is possible. Also, regarding the flow of goods such as magic tools etc, I'm prepared to discuss how to suit the circumstances of your country's merchants." (Roshi)

Due to the word "defeated," the guards, which Roshi brought along, reacted with a twitch, but the prime minister purposely ignored that. They aren't important.

First off, with this it is clear that they apparently don't know that a direct trade between Orsongrande and Horant has begun. And even the central committee's aim has become evident.

"Your offer became clear. Let's prepare an opportunity for a conference once I've coordinated our side. On that occasion we will talk about the concrete details." (Adol)

"Oh, thank you very much. Please convey my best regards to Her Majesty." (Roshi)

Roshi exits the room while bowing many times over.

The prime minister, who saw him off, slowly inhaled the aroma of the newly, brewed tea into his nose.

"He gives off the feeling of being driven against the wall quite a bit." (Hifumi)

"Earl Tohno..." (Adol)

From a different direction of the door, Roshi's group left, in a direction where there shouldn't be anything like a door, Hifumi entered the room and sat across Adol.

Although Adol was surprised with how he hasn't heard him, it reached

already the point of him choosing to whom to apply common sense after having seen the actions of the shinigami and Hifumi until now.

"Driven against the wall... that is probably so. Vichy still didn't recover from the damage it received by you, Earl Tohno. The situation is that their country has been split apart." (Adol)

"Accordingly, although the independent Pursang is being blockaded, if they are lawful state connected to Orsongrande as state, that place will yearn for support, if possible, huh? Besides..." (Hifumi)

"Have you realized something?" (Adol)

Hifumi, who laughed broadly, only said, "it's the job of the Royal Knight Order from here on", and stood up.

The prime minister speaks as he though it's something he should confirm,

"What do you think about the current Vichy, Earl Tohno?" (Adol)

"I don't care. I have no intention to support either the central committee or Pursang. ... Well, it would be great, if they did their best in competing with each other even more." (Hifumi)

"... Though I have a request to you, Earl Tohno." (Adol)

Without answering, Hifumi stood and looked into Adol's face.

"Will you accept to be present at the conference between Vichy's envoy and Imeraria-sama?" (Adol)

Hifumi, who showed a blank expression for an instant, laughed as if enjoying it in the next instant.

"That's great. Sounds interesting." (Hifumi)

☺ ☻ ☺

The unit of Vaiya's group that had been transferred to Fokalore, riding atop horses, arrived totally out-of-breath at the capital two days before the scheduled coronation ceremony. It was quite at the last moment.

"We have returned." (Vaiya)

Vaiya, who went to report of their return, looked at Sabnak sitting at his desk and showing the expression of a shadow.

“A-Ah... Vaiya, huh? Thanks for your work.” (Sabnak)

“A-Are you alright?” (Vaiya)

“Yea, I’ve been slightly busy with various preparations... Since I want you to participate from now on as well, Vaiya, have a look at this for the time being. I will have you join in the guarding, including the guys you led back here.” (Sabnak)

“Understood, sir.” (Vaiya)

Once he gave him the compiled documents, Sabnak urged Vaiya to sit down at the reception. Shibyura quickly prepares black tea.

“So, have there been any results of you going as far as Fokalore? ... With the exception of you finding a wife, that is.” (Sabnak)

“Please stop it. I obtained the permission from Viscount Amazelo, but since it has now become a talk of being adopted into their family, the marriage is still a long way off...” (Vaiya)

“Yea. Since you will honestly hurt my feelings, if you speak this joyfully, let’s close this topic now.” (Sabnak)

“... Though you will be able to manage one way or the other, if you consider doing something.” (Shibyura)

Shibyura mutters a few words due to the teary-eyed Sabnak.

“Listen, will you leave until I call you?” (Sabnak)

“Understood.” (Shibyura)

“Umm...” (Vaiya)

“Ah, it’s fine to not mind her.” (Sabnak)

“Haa.” (Vaiya)

Even while being puzzled due to the state of master and servant, which held a strange mood, Vaiya orally reported about the information of the shuriken and kusarigama, he had driven into him. He handed over a

report to Sabnak he had prepared ahead of time.

"I heard these weapons were invented by Earl Tohno, but with the possibilities of capturing without killing and causing damage to an opponent on distance, I wonder whether there is value in considering these as official equipment, too." (Vaiya)

"However, since no one but Hifumi used this in combat so far, isn't there a necessity for at least your group, Vaiya, to be skilled enough to teach about those to the other members?" (Sabnak)

"Concerning the coaching, if we are able to obtain a final permission from Earl Tohno, it will be possible to even dispatch personnel for training from Fokalore." (Vaiya)

"You've prepared considerably well." (Sabnak)

"I was able to obtain Caim-dono's cooperation." (Vaiya)

"Him, eh? ... Then I can agree." (Sabnak)

Even for Sabnak and Vaiya, in the end they never seen a scene of Caim smiling broadly. They remembered the civil official slave, who holds an alias of arrogance for each of them.

"If that's the case, Hifumi-san is just now within the castle... since he might be anywhere, it's fine if you get permission to search for him. The other members are already getting coached by Hifumi-san. It's even probable that it's necessary for him to teach someone continuously." (Sabnak)

"Besides", Sabnak showed a bitter smile due to a new document on the table.

"We might be able to test the usefulness of this 'kusarigama.' Even as early as tomorrow." (Sabnak)

The document has a tile called "Instructions for a mousetrap."

"It's a plan written by Hifumi-san. Tomorrow morning Imeraria-sama will meet with the envoy from Vichy. I hear that Hifumi-san will be present there, but... the movements of Vichy's attendants are suspicious,

going by Hifumi-san, who has been keeping an eye on them." (Sabnak)

While listening to Sabnak's talk, Vaiya goes ahead with reading the documents. It's the first time he has seen the matter about hidden pathways, but apparently those were used for monitoring and as a test for combat.

"Please get ready to personally search for Hifumi-san from now on. You will be the person in charge of this operation, Vaiya." (Sabnak)

"Roger, sir. Please leave it to me." (Vaiya)

With this being the first military operation of the Royal Knight Order, both of them put fighting spirit into it.

Chapter 74: Stupid Like This

Waiting for the coronation ceremony the next day, hurried preparations are advancing in a room, reserved for the sake of the conference, in a corner of the castle.

In a plain room, that is generally used for stuff like normal conventions etc., a luxurious chair for Princess Imeraria to sit in has been brought in and opposite of it 3 chairs have been lined up.

Providing a small table besides each of the chairs, it was planned to place things like black tea and water jugs there at the time of the conference.

The maids, who had been entrusted with the location of the conference, waited uprightly for the Princess' group to arrive in the corners of the room with tense expressions. But there was someone else there waiting for the Princess' group except the girls. Checking the room's inside from gaps in hung up pictures, they are members of the Royal Knight Order.

As only Sabnak, among the Royal Knight Order, would carry out his guard duty standing next to the princess, it had been decided to use this opportunity to test the monitoring from hidden pathways. Three adult knights were holding their breaths while huddling together shoulder-by-shoulder and holding spears in their hands.

The plan is for them to jump out through the thin wall in order to assist Sabnak in case something happens, but it doesn't even seem like it will turn into such a situation in the first place.

"Please excuse me." (Roshi)

"We awaited your arrival. Please come this way and sit down."

The first, who made an appearance, was the envoy dispatched by Vichy's central committee, Roshi. Without a single attendant, he entered the room by himself and sat down on the chair he was guided to by a maid.

With little to no waiting, a single maid enters the room and announces

「Her Highness, the Princess, is entering the room」.

Roshi stood up and bowed his head to Imeraria walking in while being slowly led by Sabnak.

“Your Majesty, the Queen, I’m extremely delighted for you to give me a chance for discussions in spite my sudden request.” (Roshi)

Though he expressed his gratitude with exaggerating gestures, he gives me a bad feeling with his expression and its fake smile stuck on it, Imeraria honestly thought deep inside.

“Officially I still haven’t inherited the throne. Currently my social standing is nothing more than that of a princess.” (Imeraria)

“This is, I was gravely impolite, Your Highness, the Princess. Then, given that I don’t want to annoy Her Highness with wasting her precious time on someone as insignificant as me, though it is immediate, the request from my country is…” (Roshi)

“Wait. There are other participants joining us on this conference.” (Imeraria)

Flatly stopping Roshi, who tried to advance the talks at his own leisure, Imeraria quietly tasted the prepared black tea.

Once she looks at the maid, who poured the tea, which gave off a nice fragrance, she saw the maid, who possessed deep blue hair and pupils, facing in the direction of Sabnak nonchalantly and without any expression.

That’s the prime minister’s daughter? Even if Imeraria’s curiosity was apparently piqued towards that girl of marriageable age, the arrival of new conference participants was announced.

“Earl Hifumi Tohno-sama and the king of Horant, Suprangel-sama, are entering.”

Although Imeraria questioned why the names were read out aloud although they aren’t at the audience hall, seeing Roshi’s shocked face and him forgetting to stand up in front of them, she watched Hifumi and an

old man entering while smiling broadly. She knew they were acting.

Imeraria, standing up from her chair, lightly pinched her skirt while doing her greetings. Even for this way of greeting it will be the last time today, she thinks deeply moved.

“Nice to meet you, Your Majesty, King of Horant. I’m Orsongrande’s princess, called Imeraria Torie Orsongrande. ... Thank you for your quick attendance.” (Imeraria)

“Oh, you are the holy woman I heard stories of. I’m the king of Horant, Suprangel Gengh Horant. I’m representing the country, which was utterly defeated by this man the other day.” (Suprangel)

Observing Suprangel, who laughed loudly pointing at Hifumi, Imeraria lowered her eyebrows. Going by the stories she heard before, the man Suprangel of Horant should be a calm person notorious for being always hard to please.

“At any rate, that vehicle called platform wagon is fun. Though I came here hitching a ride from Alyssa-dono, there was no need for breaks unlike with horses. Fodder isn’t needed either.” (Suprangel)

“What foolish thing are you saying. Thanks to that several of Horant’s soldier had to go to the medical office with muscular pains.” (Hifumi)

“Humph. Seems that they have to be trained in this way of transportation. Though they were trained by Alyssa-dono after getting healed, there is still a long way to go, huh?” (Suprangel)

As if they didn’t fight a war just a few days ago, Hifumi and Suprangel harmoniously talked with each other, sat next to each other with a flump and tasted the black tea.

As Hifumi, who should be the enemy, sat next to the ruler of the country, which should be fighting against Orsongrande, to which Hifumi belonged, Roshi’s mouth flapped open and closed.

“Ho, it’s a delicious black tea. I want to buy this before I return home.” (Suprangel)

“We will prepare it at the time of your return then. Well then, let’s start this conference. Incidentally, the representatives of all three human countries have gathered.” (Imeraria)

“T-That is…” (Roshi)

Suprangel made the panicked Roshi shut up with a single glare.

“Be quiet and listen. And it’s best to desperately think how to capitalise on such good fortune that you were able to be one of the first countries to realise how the world is changing.” (Suprangel)

Hifumi, who tossed around 4 pieces of the baked sweets, similar to biscuits, placed in front of him into his mouth in sequence, listened to their conversation while drinking the black tea in one go.

“Give me more sweets. Well, shall I report to Her Highness, the Princess, first then?” (Hifumi)

Imeraria got sullen at Hifumi for forcibly using honorific language, but immediately relaxed.

On the other hand, Roshi trembled all over in fear.

With the conference up until this point, Vichy has been left at the side with Orsongrande and Horant already having the confrontation between each other concluded. On the contrary, even a friendly atmosphere had developed between them.

Roshi had intended to finish the war with the minimal compensation of circulating the magic tools from Horant as shield and to have only the country managed by the central committee to be recognised as official state of Vichy’s territory. That plan was cut without him uttering a single word.

Even my dream of becoming a member of the committee has fallen apart with this, he thought. There was nothing Roshi could do but quiver in anger.

“Then, let’s hear your report, Earl Tohno.” (Imeraria)

Like this Orsongrande started the meeting of the three countries.

☺ ☻ ☺

Each member of the emissaries from Vichy was provided a room for lodging purposes and all of them had a room for things like meetings etc.

During the time they expected Roshi, who is their representative, to be at the conference, all of the 10 attendants decided to gather here and be on standby. As they shouldn't freely walk around within the castle of a foreign nation and without eating the prepared light meal either, the attendants talked with each other in lowered voices.

"... Before entering the castle, I tried to have a look at the situation in the city, but no matter how you look at it, it hasn't an air of being in war."

A single of them mutters a few words. Although he has a trained body, it has been arranged that he is officially following as civil official of records keeping.

"It's not like the circulation of good and money has been stopped either. There was the gossip of refugees coming and going from the direction of Horant, but that hasn't caused the city to fall into chaos either. It was really "only coming and going.""

"There was a rumour that generally the destination of those refugees was the Fokalore territory..."

The "refugees", appearing in their procured gossips, are the former soldiers of Horant, who have already arrived in Fokalore, and those escaping after the defeat of Horant. The real meaning of the information about the refugees has been mixed up.

"Won't our country end up being completely shaved off by Fokalore, if it stays like this? Didn't a new defecting city appear just a few days ago? Not only Pursang, it won't be even strange for someone else to double-cross the central committee once again."

"Don't say anything careless."

However, since all of them are thinking about the same thing with a difference in seriousness, no further words of remonstration are spoken.

“Captain, shouldn’t we return to our own country to relay the state of affairs either way? It won’t solve anything even if we stay here as is. Roshi, that guy, won’t be even able to directly talk with the prime minister, not to mention the princess, will he?”

“Don’t call me captain. You don’t know who might be listening in.”

“You worry too much.”

Although he was warned by the oldest man, the young man ended up laughing.

However, there’s definitely someone here eavesdropping on their talks and observing them.

(They aren’t simple attendants after all, huh… ?) (Vaiya)

Similar to the location of the conference, a unit, led by Vaiya, was monitoring them from a hidden pathway. As there’s also a chance of the other side possessing weapons this time, they are monitoring with the same number as there are attendants, 10, split up in 3 places.

“… Depending on the situation, we will kill Roshi.”

“That is…”

Everyone gulped due to the words spoken by the man called captain.

“If we are able to cleverly pin the crime on Earl Tohno once it becomes a diplomatic issue, our country’s position will become slightly better. … I have obtained the permission from central to go as far as making such judgement.”

“However, will it go that smoothly? Our opponent is that Earl Tohno.”

“Although he might be called powerful, if he causes a diplomatic issue, he won’t be able to avoid getting criticized. At the very least his influence within this country will fall. He should loose the leeway to pay attention to betraying cities and to support Pursang.”

“Since his name as hero has been spreading, it will be easy to propagate this kind of scandal”, the captain explained. Though he smiled wryly as that was the explanation he had been provided by the central committee.

Under the preamble that Vichy's position likely won't improve, if the conference finishes in disagreement, they began to discuss in order to create a situation of "if Roshi is killed, Hifumi would fall into disgrace."

Vaiya, who heard that from his hiding place, made a complicated face.

The knight next to him addressed him in a low voice.

"Vice-captain, they are trying to cause some incident within the castle..."

"Yea, seems so, but... do you think their hands will reach with Earl Tohno as opponent?"

"That's likely futile. If the envoy was hostile, it won't end with the attendants being sorry either. Beside, he probably doesn't care about the evaluation from others."

Due to the knight answering immediately and resolutely, Vaiya nodded while smiling bitterly.

"I think so, too. ... While you continue monitoring them, I will go and report about this to Earl Tohno and the captain for the time being."

"As you've ordered."

It doesn't look like this will have its turn this time, Vaiya touched the shuriken in his pocket with a slightly regretful feeling.

☺ ☻ ☺

In a yet different room within the castle, the nobles, who ended up being left outside the main faction of Orsongrande, were talking together face-to-face with glum expressions.

"At last, it's the birth of a queen, huh... ?"

Though it should be an auspicious event, their tones and expressions were depressed.

No wonder, they were the nobles of the former prince faction, who barely preserved their roles within the castle. Due to the matter of the attempted assassination of the princes which should also be called the

rampaging of the queen, all of their movements resulted in backfiring on them. They already ended up being weakened as far as to the degree of being ignored in regards to their influence.

Also, the prince faction, which previously commanded the majority of the nobles in the castle, has been decreased to the point of no more than the 5 in this room. Furthermore, combined with their low-ranking, with a Viscount being the most prominent, they are in a state, where you can even say that they have no influence at all.

The people, who after having lost their power, were dismissed from their duties and returned to their territory, were still well off. Those found to be corrupt after an investigation by the knight order, which had been completely reorganized as organization under the direct control of the princess, have been secretly "disposed off" behind the scenes or boldly in front of everyone as warning.

"I heard the envoy from the central committee of Vichy is currently carrying out a conference with the princess."

"Originally, the nature of invading our country was an unnecessary act for Vichy and Horant. As result of Vichy currying favours with and tricking the nobles nobles of our country, including even us in this situation, this probably became a too big problem for the situation to be fairly beneficial. As for Horant, it was used as cause for destroying our knight orders, which were our combat potential."

As a matter of fact the knights on duty were secretly listening to this conversation, however the knights, who were in three man cells, endured by rubbing their eyebrows with turning movements to lower their headaches as they exchanged looks at each other's faces.

Making plans to get the aqua sapphire, which is a precious gem of this country, past the national border by conspiring with Vichy and winning over Horant's magicians to this country are undoubtedly the responsibilities of nobles.

The fact, that the talks don't mention Hifumi here, is likely owed to their complete state of terror, the knights observed. They are able to

agree with that.

"... In that case, since the envoy from Vichy is just right now in this castle, won't it also be fine to get them to cooperate one way or the other?"

"Cooperate, how?"

The middle-aged noble, as the eldest and with the highest peerage, bent himself forward listening as the young noble began his proposal while smiling broadly.

"We have to coordinate in order to obtain the duty of mediating the strengthening of relations with Vichy. Since we are in a situation of buying magic tools from Horant through Vichy, it means we will be able to make contact with those related to restoration in Vichy. The princess has to keep her appearance as the representative of the victorious nation, however if we can establish negotiations to guarantee the trade behind the scenes, we will be free from obstacles, including even the princess."

That suggestion was welcomed by everyone at this place as excellent plan by clapping on their knees.

"Though Earl Tohno is powerful, he is a rising noble. They won't be able to refuse us this part as we are nobles, who have full knowledge of diplomacy through our successive generations."

"Well, let's settle the details of the proposal right away. If it turns out well, there's also the possibility of us rising in peerage."

The knights softly sighed while looking at the nobles, who have smiling faces due to the cheerful topic, making plans carelessly. The knights understood well how the nobles selfishly didn't grasp reality.

Chapter 75: DreamGirls

The first conference of the three countries advanced in a way of mostly ignoring Vichy.

As Hifumi was basically only listening and as Imeraria and Suprangel talked about the main points, it was a situation, where Roshi only shyly voiced his opinion at the few times Imeraria brought up a subject and took him into consideration.

As result it reached a stage of Orsongrande and Horant tying a direct treaty of commerce once Horant paid a little amount of reparations. This also included the matter of building a military information exchange through Hifumi.

In regards to Vichy, Horant will continue the same degree of exchange as until now, but as a matter of fact the monopolistic circulation of magic tools would disappear. “As soon as you pay the reparations, you can request ‘cooperation towards peace’ from Orsongrande”, Imeraria stated as verbal message to the central committee.

“What does that cooperation towards peace concretely contain… ?” (Roshi)

Although he spoke passionately that he would finalize the negotiations with Orsongrande by himself at first, Roshi, who completely dropped his shoulders at the final stages of the conference, timidly spoke his words to verify the ambiguous verbal message.

Showing her best smile, Imeraria returns in flat speech to Roshi,

“Concerning the war this time, our country considers the central committee to be fully responsible. And even concerning the situation of unnecessarily increasing the victims in Vichy itself and as result of that falling into a state close to collapse, we believe Vichy itself being the cause by provoking a person it shouldn’t have touched.” (Imeraria)

Speaking up to here, she turns a fleeting glance towards Hifumi. The person, who shouldn’t be touched, showed an indifferent attitude as he

yawned while being aware that he is being watched.

Imeraria took a small breath.

“Regarding the split, former Vichy region, including the central committee, I demand formal reparations, but above that I want them to come up with a plan by themselves. They shouldn’t try to use me or my country in order to recover from their own mistakes. I call such behaviour simply disagreeable.” (Imeraria)

“Let’s have talks once again after they came to a conclusion about what they should do before involving me in their own country’s problems”, Imeraria clearly said.

Suprangel turned a gentle look at here I feel such girl is quite likeable.

“It is as the new Majesty the Queen says. The cleaning up of one’s own country is something to be concluded by one’s own country. If you rely on someone, it will naturally require an equal reward.” (Suprangel)

Even though Roshi, who ended up losing his position completely, began the conference to work out the details of a treaty, he was gently expelled from the location of the conference.

There wasn’t anyone, who noticed Hifumi’s gaze following Roshi as he faced towards the door in a hurry, giving a polite phrase for parting from the room, with a completely, dispirited look. Neither the matter of his mouth forming a smile.

☺ ☻ ☺

Roshi, heading towards the rest room where his attendants are waiting, wasn’t even accompanied by a single person guiding him. He can’t take the statement as favourable, if he believes in it, at all. Roshi interpreted it as proof of being looked down on by Orsongrande itself and in reality his treatment had just such meaning.

Walking trudgingly without saying a word, Roshi was called by someone.

“Excuse me, aren’t you the envoy from Vichy?”

“Haa, just as you say. You are?” (Roshi)

Roshi asked for the man’s name exposing his vigilance towards the middle-aged man, who suddenly appeared and started a conversation.

“I’m a Viscount of Orsongrande called Leonhart. You seem to be alone, what has happened to the guide from our country?” (Leonhart)

Roshi only frowned without answering Leonhart’s question.

“Certainly you don’t want to tell me that they haven’t assigned a guide to you, who came here as representative of your country, right? This is our country’s, no, the princess’ mistake! How to say it, although she’s still young, I want to apologise for the impoliteness on behalf of the princess. Let’s go, I will accompany you instead.” (Leonhart)

Receiving an apology that isn’t filled with a feeling of being an exaggerated gesture, Roshi doubted whether he is being made fun of.

“No, I will return myself. Thank you very much for your concerns.” (Roshi)

“No, not at all, there’s no need to hold back. … As you look unwell for some reason, is there something wrong with your health as well?” (Leonhart)

Although Roshi almost clicked his tongue unintentionally, he withstood with an effort.

“I have been treated awfully by Her Highness the Princess at the conference just now. I felt depressed, if I consider that I have to report after returning to my own country.” (Roshi)

Though I didn’t intend to be sarcastic, my words ended up having a feeling of being slightly malicious, but that doesn’t really matter, does it? Roshi became defiant.

“My goodness… then, if you are able to build a connection with nobles from Orsongrande, won’t it be possible for you to preserve your face a little bit, Envoy-dono?” (Leonhart)

“… What are you trying to say?” (Roshi)

“There aren’t few nobles, who have been raising their eyebrows due to to egoistic behaviour of the princess. If you don’t mind, let’s have a talk at a different place.” (Leonhart)

How suspicious, Roshi thought. Although he is certainly wearing finely tailored clothes befitting a noble, once I look at my conversation partner again, that middle-aged man gives off a feeling as if having some kind of misunderstanding with his faint smile and his somewhat dull appearance.

However, once I consider it in reverse, if he has approached me with the intention to use me, he might be useful in some way, he switches over his thinking. Even if I return to my country as is, I will have to take the blame for the breakdown in negotiations with Orsongrande and it’s obvious that I will be transferred to a remote place.

“Well, then let’s go to the room used by us. I want you to also extend your greetings to my attendants without fail.” (Roshi)

“Indeed, if you consider the matters from now on, it’s indispensable to meet them. Then, let’s go.” (Leonhart)

Roshi evaluated the noble’s smile as suspicious, but he didn’t notice that he was also showing the same face himself.

☺ ☻ ☺

“Viscount Leonhart has come into contact with Vichy’s envoy. They went towards the room, where the attendants are waiting on standby. I believe it to be likely that they will carry out some kind of negotiations.”

Knight Captain Lotomago, who received the report in his office, only nodded without showing any particular reaction.

Seeing that, the knight continues his report.

“In the report from Royal Knight Order Vice-Captain Vaiya there was a mention about the possibility of Envoy Roshi to be killed by his attendants. ... It was mentioned that the Royal Knight Order is observing the progress attentively, but... this won’t result in the overlooking of a crime within the castle, right? Although they don’t belong to the main

faction, there is a possibility of our country's nobles being dragged into it. Dispatching the knight order here..."

"Balzephon. (T/N: >> Baruzefon <<)" (Lotomago)

The knight, who started to get heated up while talking, was reigned in with Lotomago calling his name.

"I will listen to the report. But, I have no intention to listen to your own personal opinion. The matters within the castle are decided by Imeraria-sama and the Royal Knight Order." (Lotomago)

"However..." (Balzephon)

"Return to your duty. It's good that you reported on something, you saw by chance. But, as our primary task is to finish the coronation ceremony safely tomorrow, we have to keep a watchful eye on things outside the castle." (Lotomago)

"... Understood." (Balzephon)

Balzephon has left the room reluctantly. However, the eyes he turned at me were filled with hatred, albeit only for an instant, Lotomago noticed.

Even Vaiya, who came entering as replacement, had this hateful gaze turned at him, but Vaiya, receiving it from behind, didn't notice.

"Please excuse me for my long silence, Captain Lotomago... Is Balzephon doing well at his new assignment?" (Vaiya)

"Do you know him?" (Lotomago)

Lotomago, urging him on to take a seat, told the maid to bring tea.

"Of course. We both were originally in the Second Knight Order. The time of recruitment is drawing near as well. ... Did something happen with him?" (Vaiya)

"No, I was just slightly worried. Leaving that aside, weren't you monitoring the lot from Vichy?" (Lotomago)

"We are alternating at a certain interval of time. There are no humans who possess the ability to concentrate for countless hours. If you are

staying still in a dark and narrow place, you will end up feeling depressed." (Vaiya)

Vaiya laughed and thankfully received the black tea offered by a maid. The maid, to whom he smiled, smled with a slightly red face and lightly returned to a corner of the room.

"And, that means that something happened for Vichy's envoy to make a move." (Vaiya)

"Indeed. Viscount Leonhart contacted Roshi, who was expelled from the conference. It looks like they entered Vichy's rest room, you monitored until just now, together." (Lotomago)

"They made a move, huh? It was faster than I thought." (Vaiya)

"What? So you knew about it?" (Lotomago)

Vaiya apologised with a "I'm sorry" to Lotomago, who exhaled his breath with a bored look.

"We have grasped it until the point that the remnants of the prince faction, such as Viscount Leonhart, are scheming to create a link with Vichy. ... Although I say that, as outcome of the conference today, they won't achieve anything, even if they were able to make a connection with Vichy." (Vaiya)

Vaiya was drinking the black tea with an atmosphere of composure, but Lotomago, remembering the eyes of Balzephon just now, felt some unpleasant sense of discomfort.

"Since we don't know when an uproar might happen, we will continue to observe", thanking for the tea, Vaiya left Lotomago's office.

Brooding over it by himself for a short while, Lotomago slowly stood up, after sorting the documents in front of him, and left towards somewhere.

☺ ☻ ☺

If you look down from the balcony of the castle, there is a plaza in front of the castle, which has been usually used by tourists and local residents as place of relaxation and refreshment to some degree. That plaza has

been locked out for the general public and several soldiers are checking whether there are any suspicious people while moving in a quick march.

Those, who sometimes try to pass through, like merchants coming to deliver goods to the castle, received a more strict inspection than usual at a place further away from the castle as usual. But all of them are obediently accepting the inspections with a “It can’t be helped” written on their faces.

If you look towards the city from that plaza, you will see a lot more food stalls than usual having set up at spots not belonging to the plaza. It appeared as if the population density of the city had risen.

Hifumi, who sat cross-legged on the railing of the balcony, is watching expressionlessly the activity of those people.

Although he is watching them, he isn’t conscious of them.

He is in the middle of his daily meditation, but his thoughts are recalling the men and women he had killed so far. Slowly reflecting upon their final moments, he expresses his gratitude to them within his mind.

He had a premonition that he will once again kill some people within the castle at the coronation ceremony tomorrow or before that. Naturally a smile appears on his face.

As person following the path of martial arts (T/N: not carnage? o.O), this is something joyful. So far I have killed many people. I was able to prove that the techniques, I refined, were the real deal. And, even after this, I will also kill many people, I guess. As he thinks about that, his mind becomes calm. As if a water’s surface without a single ripple, a gentle mood spreads in his chest.

Suddenly Hifumi raised his face and looked westward.

On the other side of the city, before the horizon becomes a blur, there is a prairie area, where the beastman race lives, I was previously told by Sabnak. He said there are elves in the adjoining forest, too.

It seems there are countries, where humans live, even further beyond the prairie.

I heard that the beastmen are strong.

I wonder what kind of battle style they use.

Do they use weapons? Do they use fangs and claws? I wonder if there are possibly some who can fly.

“That’s it. I will go to the prairie once the coronation ceremony has finished.” (Hifumi)

I will buy plenty of food, stuff it in my darkness storage, buy a horse and go there by myself. It’s fine if I leave the matters of the territory to Caim’s group. Let’s have Pruflas make another weapon as well, when I’m close to the territory.

It was a feeling as if looking forward to a picnic.

“Hifumi-san.” (Alyssa)

It was Alyssa coming out to the balcony.

With her ice blue pupils shining within her red, frizzy hair, she is laughing happily.

“Somehow you seem to be happy. Did something good happen?” (Alyssa)

“Something good? There are only good things since I came to this world. I’m looking forward to the enjoyable things from now on, too, I guess.” (Hifumi)

“Is that so?” (Alyssa)

Jumping up without effort, she sat down next to Hifumi.

“Horant’s king-sama will return home once the coronation ceremony has finished. Then I will return to Fokalore.” (Alyssa)

“I see.” (Hifumi)

“Is there something I should do once I return?” (Alyssa)

She comes asking with a familiarity as if checking the details for helping out, but even though things may appear this way, it’s a meeting between feudal lord and the one in charge of military affairs. Though both of them are considering it to be fine like this.

“Let’s see. Since there will likely powerful monsters appear close to Fokalore for a while, it’s probably necessary to prepare for them. As I will temporarily go to Fokalore as well, I will instruct you on-site.” (Hifumi)

“Uh huh. I wonder if Origa-san is healthy.” (Alyssa)

“Well, she’s probably fine. Since she will probably return to Fokalore sooner or later, it’s fine for you to listen to various stories from her, once she came back.” (Hifumi)

“As the situation differs depending whether your opponent is human or beast, the stories of Origa, who experienced it herself, might be of use as reference for the troops”, Hifumi says.

Nodding obediently, Alyssa laughed and said “it would be nice if she returned quickly.”

“Hifumi-san, will you do your job as feudal lord-sama after returning to the territory? Since it appears that Phyrinion-san is getting married, she won’t be able to work anymore.” (Alyssa)

“For things like the administration of the territory the top will only become a decoration if the general staff grows up. With me being me, I plan to go looking for interesting things.” (Hifumi)

“The interesting things you are talking about, Hifumi-san…” (Alyssa)

Alyssa made a difficult face and a monyo monyo was visible on her face.

I don’t have any intention to directly criticize Hifumi’s preferences. And I’m also thankful for the matter of being rescued, but I don’t think I want to actively kill for the sake of Hifumi like Origa.

“Oh well, first I shall enjoy the things happening from now. It’s fine for you to stick to Sabnak. It might give you an interesting experience.” (Hifumi)

“Understood. Greet me once you come back to Fokalore, ok? It’s unpleasant to be left behind.” (Alyssa)

Alyssa quickly jumped off the railing and dashed away in the twinkling of an eye.

“Well, I think I should sleep a bit before it’s too late.” (Hifumi)

Retrieving a sweetened bun from his darkness storage, Hifumi silently vanished inside the castle while chewing with a sound of munching.

Chapter 76: Rebellion

The population of Fokalore has in fact increased three times after the change of feudal lords. Although its number has gone up quite a bit due to immigrants and refugees, the release of an early phase of a population management system and because there was a considerable number of residents, who were the kind to spend money coming from outside for the sake of education, an overall balance was attained.

Those related to commerce and industry have been outstandingly developing their sales proficiency and productivity even if compared to outside the country, let alone the domestic companies.

By Hifumi's instruction a license system for businesses has been set up. The tax system has been changed to declaring the taxes owed each time. The feudal lord has completely seized the opportunity to circulate goods and money from city to city within the territory by using the rail cars. Even just the sales from this enterprise are contributing to the territory's operation heavily.

As for the industry, the standards have been unified for the first time in this world. Due to the "screw", which had been invented by Hifumi, carpenters and ironworkers experienced a great upheaval. Until then it was popular to affix things irreversibly by using nails or welding, but with the introduction of screws and by explosively spreading the industrial products, which were standardized, hasty people are starting to say things like「Fokalore creates the standards of all industrial products」.

But it's not only the aspect of knowledge. All territories are also closely observing its military parts. Staying for the sake of participating in the training of each unit, the money spent in the cities is increasing as result.

Fokalore gathered the attention and its population is growing. As outcome, the staff members and the civil official slaves, who were controlling them, became busy once again.

"Gigigi..." (Miyukare)

Miyukare, being the sole civil official slave in charge of military affairs,

is finishing the documents with a dreadful expression while holding down her temper.

In the space for the sake of the civil official slaves performing their official duties, Miyukare, without even concealing her ill humour, processed the documents with a sound of the pen scribbling across the papers rapidly. Doelgar and Paryu were in the room as well, but both of them are doing their jobs in silence.

“You know…” (Doelgar)

“What?!” (Miyukare)

Miyukare turns her sight as if pouncing down on him towards Doelgar, who timidly called out to her.

“Don’t glare at me like that… Lord-sama told us that he agrees about the retired soldiers. We were able to procure the participation of the ironworkers, too.” (Doelgar)

“Right. Then, I will notify the soldiers, who are considering to retire, and have them introduced to the industry guild as applicants.” (Miyukare)

“Uh huh, I leave it to you.” (Doelgar)

Once he finished his business, Doelgar left as if running away by saying「I will go report it to the guild」.

“Excuse me.”

A single staff member came entering as replacement, but seeing Miyukare’s expression, he made a startled face for an instant. He went towards Paryu’s desk at a quick pace.

Paryu, who raised her face, has her violet eyes half closed as if being drowsy, but the staff member doesn’t particularly mind it as it is the usual and hands her the documents, he held in his hands.

“Paryu-san, a message from the capital came.”

“Thank you very much. I will check it, okay?” (Paryu)

Once the staff member has left, Paryu looks over the documents given

to her. Becoming completely familiar with dealing with paperwork and drawing up a family register, she reads through the documents quickly. She grasps the contents, written down on one sheet of the documents, in several seconds. It's not at the level of Caim, but her documents throughput is high amongst the staff members of the territory.

"... Miyukare-san. As soon as the coronation ceremony in the capital finishes, Director of Military Affairs Alyssa will return, it seems." (Paryu)

Miyukare stood up with a force that knocked down the chair due to Paryu's words, which were conveyed without any preface at all.

"Really!?" (Miyukare)

"Unless this document is a forgery. Since it has Lord-sama's usual, unreadable signature, I believe there's no mistake to that." (Paryu)

"In that case, it's alright! It's indispensable to throw a welcome home party, right!?" (Miyukare)

"Will the restaurant at that place be fine? Is it even better to reserve a hotel?" Towards Miyukare, who shows a slovenly face and says exactly these words with a smile or rather a broad grin, Paryu decided to consider this to be already an illness. An incurable illness, that is.

"Lord-sama will come back as well. Since he's coming back leading several soldiers he was entrusted with by Vichy, we've been told to prepare their participation in military training. I will find a boarding house for them but since there's no one but you, Miyukare-san, who can put them into a training schedule, please do that, ok?" (Paryu)

"Leave it to me! There shouldn't be much time, right? When was the coronation ceremony?" (Miyukare)

"It's today." (Paryu)

☺ ● ☺

Viscount Leonhart coming in contact with Roshi is a move trying to create a link to Vichy. It was leaked to the Royal Knight Order, monitoring within the castle.

The day before, at the time when Leonhart had the first session of discussions together with the attendants of Vichy, he said「there are also other nobles, who are hoping to form a friendly relationship with your country」. Hoping for a conference with the other nobles before the coronation ceremony and as result of Roshi also agreeing to that, it had been decided to let them freely do it in order to arrest the whole lot at once.

And today, just like yesterday, with the scene playing out at the rest room, provided for the envoy of Vichy, their conference started.

The nobles politely greeted Roshi in turns, in a modest manner which didn't seem noble-like.

On the other hand, although Roshi seems to intend being plenty cautious, there's a necessity for results to come out here. The commander of the attendants, who made sure to be slightly separated from them, calmly saw through him obviously being impatient.

"The attendants are nothing more than extras", it was convenient for the attendants that the nobles from Orsongrade failed to even exchange a decent amount of words with them. No one cared about them even as they moved stealthily to their places and blocked the entrance of the room's door.

Only Vaiya, who was monitoring them secretly, noticed those movements.

"Well then, even though it's sudden, let's discuss the shape of our friendship." (Leonhart)

The discussions advance in a way of Leonhart taking the lead.

"If we get right to the point, for our country I consider it satisfactory if we proceed with the previous set up circulation of goods and money towards Orsongrande." (Roshi)

As the nobles are showing that they haven't understood Roshi's words right away, Leonhart inquires about his real intention.

"There is also a possibility of our country's merchants being restricted

from entering your country from now on. It will likely be difficult to sell the merchandise of a hostile nation. Accordingly, we can have someone buy them temporarily if we are able to set up a selling agency within Orsongrande." (Roshi)

Even while expressing their understanding as I went this far to put it into words, their reaction is weak and lacking. Won't they be able to understand it unless I tell them directly? Roshi was getting irritated within his mind.

"... Of course, if you were to agree to the cooperation, there is no doubt that you will be able to secure large profit margins at the time of selling the items in your country since we will sell the merchandise cheaply to you wholesale." (Roshi)

"Oh, this a great suggestion! On top of a cooperation, you go even as far as offering us profits, Roshi-dono." (Leonhart)

"It's a truly thoughtful story!"

The nobles, who at last comprehended the benefits after he explained up to there, are praising Roshi unanimously while exchanging glances amongst each other inquiring about the timing of the contest over the profits.

(Are these guys really nobles?) (Attendant's commander)

The commander of the attendants watched these exchanges while being disgusted from the bottom of his heart. Speaking of nobles, he thought of them as a group pointlessly and flowery talking about their love for their country while holding money and authority, though unable to hide even a single part of their desire through their thin skin.

In this case, Vichy's merchants are 100 times better at talking while hiding their greed, the commander evaluated.

Shifting his line of view, he secretly gave the other attendants the sign to carry out the plan. Some nodded silently. Those being outside the noble's view have already drawn their hands to their sword's hilts.

"Then, let's talk about the details and volume of the business right

away…” (Leonhart)

Leonhart, whose laughter changed into a broad grin, bent himself forward. With Roshi being in front of him on the other side, he can see the attendant’s commander raising his sword overhead. In the next moment Leonhart’s face is sullied by a spray of blood.

“Bad luck, we will end the play-friends game here.”

Being deeply cut into the head, Roshi died instantly. The commander, who stepped over his corpse, which fell off the chair, prepared his blood-soaked sword.

“B-Bastard! Your own country’s envoy…” (Leonhart)

“U-Uwaa!”

While he was about to attack Leonhart, the other nobles, who were surprised by the bloody event, are scrambling for running away and head towards the door visibly tumbling about. However, even there they have been awaited by attendants standing in the way.

“Hii…”

“Have everyone here die. As the discussions haven’t gone well, the enraged nobles of Orsongrande have stabbed Roshi with knives. Even though we were able to somehow counterattack, Roshi has passed away. You guys have passed away, too. That’s how it will go.”

At the moment he pointed the sword at Leonhart, who has lost the ability to say anything due to surprise, a shuriken came flying from who-knows-where and pierced into the commander’s right arm. The impact caused his sword to leap out of his hands.

“Ugu!? What the heck!?”

While being bewildered by the unknown piece of metal that pierced his arm, an avalanche of knights flowed out of the hidden pathway. In the blink of an eye the situation within the room changed into a state of fighting.

Vaiya, who threw the shuriken, jumped in front of the commander

holding a kusarigama in his hand.

“We are Orsongrande’s Royal Knight Order. There is a necessity for us to deal with this lot (the nobles). We will also restrain you for the crime of drawing your swords within the castle. If you surrender, we won’t kill you.” (Vaiya)

“Are you an idiot!? There’s no way we will surrender just because you tell us to do so!” (Commander)

The commander, who picked up his sword with his left hand while yelling, had his face severely struck by the counterweight thrown by Vaiya as he turned around.

Dropping his sword once again, he fainted by being hit with the sickle’s hilt as he was holding his face.

Although several of his group’s members were injured as well, all of the attendants were successfully arrested without being killed. For the knights, who are wearing armours, the attendants, who wear nothing more but simple clothes, were almost no contest.

“W-We are saved...” (Leonhart)

Vaiya stands in front of Leonhart, who sighed in relief while sitting down unable to stand up due to fear.

“Are you someone from the knight orders? You have my thanks.” (Leonhart)

“It seems you are misunderstanding something here though.” (Vaiya)

Vaiya changes from holding the kusarigama to holding a rope.

“You are a target for arrest as well. During the time until you receive your punishments from the new queen, I will have you obediently wait in prison.” (Vaiya)

“W-What foolish thing to say! What kind of crime did...” (Leonhart)

“You have been tolerated since you are harmless. If you were harmful, you would have been removed by now.” (Vaiya)

Vaiya, who quickly tied up Leonhart, gave the order to put him together with the other nobles into the prison managed by the knight order.

Even Roshi's fallen corpse is quickly disposed of by the knight order. In the meanwhile Vaiya constantly paid an undue amount of attention to his surroundings.

"Did something happen, Vice-Captain?"

"No... I thought Earl Tohno would appear because of a battle scene like this, but... well, it's fine, I guess. The coronation ceremony will start soon. We will entrust the conspicuous places to Captain Sabnak. We will continue to monitor from the shadows then." (Vaiya)

Hearing Vaiya's words, the knights headed quickly towards their stations.

☺ ☻ ☺

One hour before the coronation ceremony.

It was Imeraria's office were an incident started.

"Excuse me."

"You are ... if I remember correctly, you were someone from the knight order. I believe you were in charge of guarding outside the castle, but did something happen?" (Imeraria)

It was Balzephon, affiliated to the knight order, who visited the office.

Imeraria, who felt doubts about a knight, whom she hardly ever met, suddenly visiting, experienced some uncomfortable feeling.

Balzephon, who quickly surveyed the room while entering, stood in front of Imeraria and bowed respectfully. But, he didn't choose to kneel following the etiquette of retainers.

The maids, who were close-by, are surprised by his unbelievably impolite attitude. At the moment Imeraria tried to open her mouth to warn him that he should be more careful, Balzephon spoke first.

"Your Highness, I'm called Balzephon. I was a member of the Second

Knight Order, but now I belong to the unified knight order. Just as Your Highness' said, the Royal Knight Order is protecting inside the castle and we are to guard outside the castle. ... However." (Balzephon)

Balzephon took a straight look at Imeraria with forceful eyes.

"Why is a former member of the Third Knight Order the captain of the Royal Knight Order? Isn't that person only talented at flattering up to Earl Tohno without even being able to properly handle a sword? Although the vice-captain is Vaiya, that person is an imbecile, who only does what he's told. He was never entrusted any important tasks at the Second Knight Order." (Balzephon)

"... It looks like you are unhappy with my human resources. However, your manner of handling that is disrespectful. Quickly leave this room and I will overlook this situation." (Imeraria)

Balzephon, who received that advice, laughed scornfully with a "Humph."

"No, I'm the one controlling this situation... no, we are. I will have you obediently stay in this room. Given that there will be a small cleaning within the castle after this, during that time, let's get you ready to spend your entire life's time as puppet queen hereafter." (Balzephon)

"What are you saying... ?" (Imeraria)

Once Imeraria voiced her doubt, the knight, who stood at her side, suddenly drew his sword and thrust it at Imeraria.

"! ... You are!" (Imeraria)

The knight slightly falters due to her stern glare, but he doesn't lower the sword.

"Just like me, he is originally from the Second Knight Order. It was difficult to create an opportunity where Sabnak and the bunch of the former Third Knight Order isn't present. The nobles are nothing but dumb. They were unusable incompetents even for acting as decoys with Vichy's group." (Balzephon)

“You were called Balzephon, right? What’s your goal?” (Imeraria)

With this, it’s the second time I have a sword thrust in front of me. Compared to the blood-lust I faced from Hifumi at that time, there isn’t anything like that present currently, she persuaded herself. Having calmed down, Imeraria asked a question.

“Honour.” (Balzephon)

“Eh?” (Imeraria)

“For us knights it is honourable to win by fighting our enemies fair and square. It’s not to be pleased with not knowing how to wield a weapon like Vaiya and neither is it to record useless conversations while stealthily peeping from the shadows like the bunch from the Third Knight Order. Originally it all became ridiculous starting with Your Highness appointing that man to a responsible post. We only want to reset that.” (Balzephon)

The other knights, who were present in the room, also drew their swords. The frightened maids gathered at one spot.

“Right now our other companions are likely getting rid of Sabnak and Lotomago. Once we suppressed the bunch of the former Third Knight Order, we will have Your Highness grandly announce this feat to the citizens.” (Balzephon)

Balzephon is elated of himself, Imeraria judged.

“Earl Tohno will be banished from this country. Regarding Vichy and Horant, who caused a pointless war, they will receive punishment from the knight order in addition to the reparations.” (Balzephon)

“Can you hold onto your honour as knight with such meaningless action?” (Imeraria)

Once Imeraria asked as if being disgusted, Balzephon quickly approached her and hit Imeraria’s cheek with his open hand.

Even the knight thrusting the sword at her was surprised by that, but he kept his mouth shut while glaring.

“Though it was the responsibility of these countries to meaninglessly decrease our knight order, don’t you agree? This will also serve as memorial service for the First and Second Knight Order, who died in the fight against Horant. I won’t allow you to insult that.” (Balzephon)

While enduring the pain of her cheek, Imeraria worried more about Hifumi’s situation than that of the man in front of her. I don’t know what kind of mess that man will cause by taking advantage of these circumstances.

The rebellion of the knights silently began before the coronation ceremony.

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